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Current Notes

Vol. 8 No. 10 December 1988

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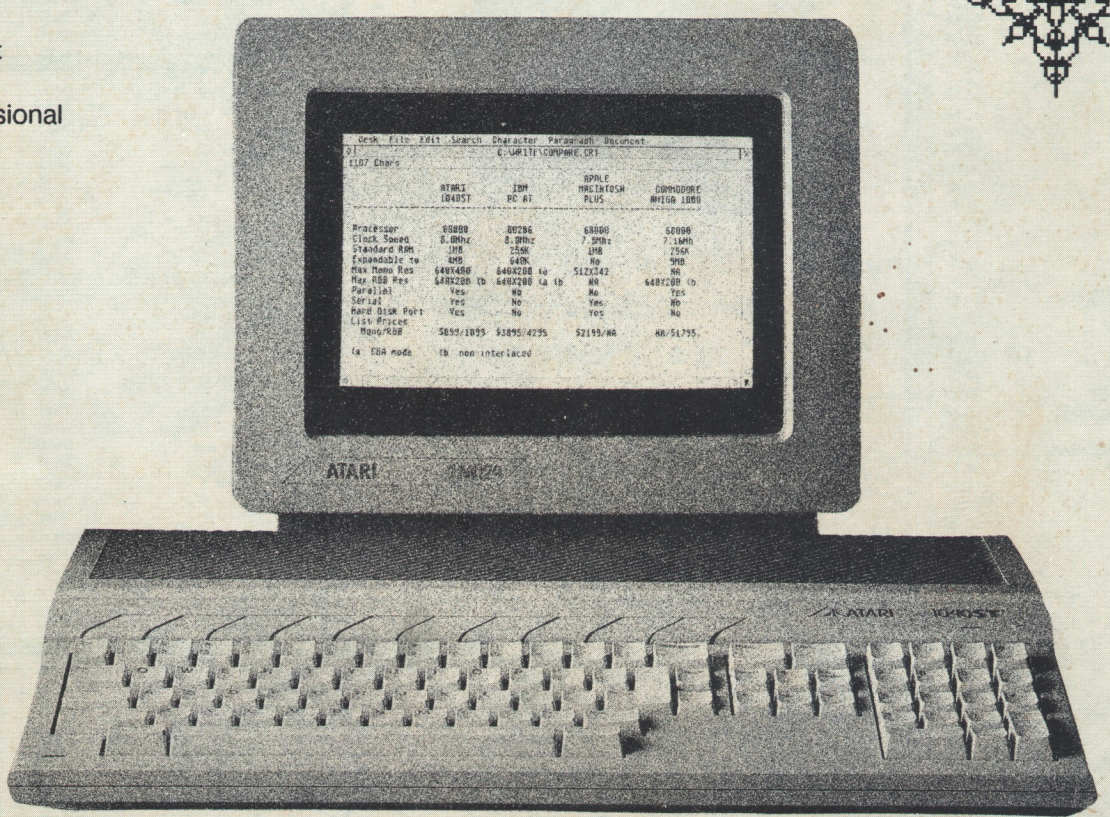

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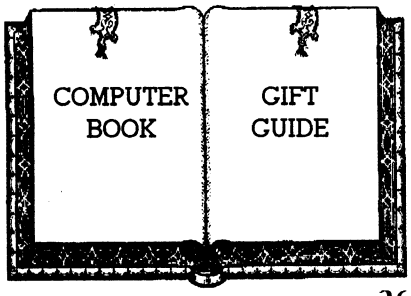

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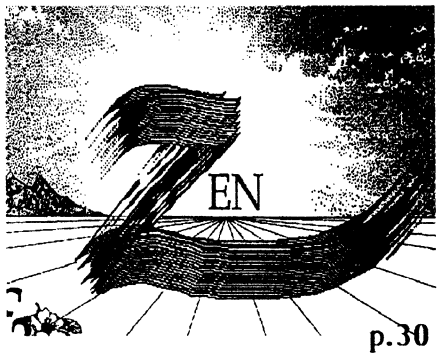

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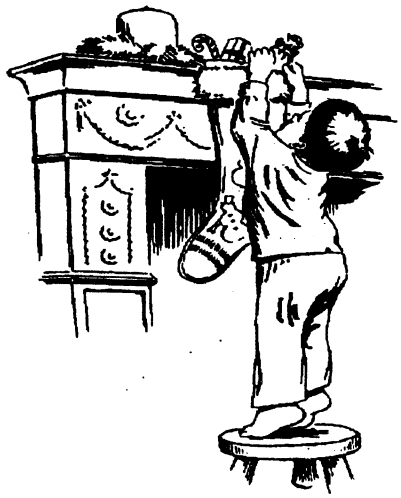

Twas the night before Christmas, when all thru the house
Cursors still moved, with the help of a mouse.
The stockings weren't hung yet, the chimney was bare
But still there was hope that Santa soon would be there.

The keyboards weren't nestled all snug under covers.
They were clicking away by true Atari lovers.
Momma wasn't in her kerchief, I not in my cap.
Our brains were still working, no time for a nap.

The deadline was coming, the next issue must be finished.
Atariland happenings cannot be diminished.
There were letters to edit and articles to read.
"Let me finish just one little page more," I plead.

"But what about the bicycles, doll houses and such?
They take some assembly, the box says not much.
The children are expecting some things to appear.
Santa **will** get to our house, won't he this year?"

"Don't worry, dear wife, it will all turn out right.
We'll take "Magic" from Sac and use laser light.
Current Notes will be finished, the gifts will be done.
Santa will soon get here, we'll have time for fun."

Long into the night, the printer kept whirring,
While somewhere off yonder, the reindeer were stirring.
Oh, what will he bring me that jolly old elf,
An ST, a printer, or just a new shelf?

Then just as the last page was finally done,
A short time before one could see morning's sun,
A little old man all dressed up in red
Came bounding inside with a pack from his sled.

There was *Word Perfect* for Heidi and *Test Drive* for Joe,
For the youngest, Rebecca, *Monopoly* to pass go,
For Cindy, *Barbarian*, for Joyce, *Easy Score*,
For me *Fleetstreet Publisher*, and 40 meg more.

So, Christmas was happy, the pages to the printer.
We could finally settle in for a fresh look at winter.
Good memories linger as the year nears its end.
Thanks to all the good writers and many a friend.

To you, our dear readers, we fondly express
Best wishes for next year, we hope it's your best.
And now ere these pages are closed out of sight
"Merry Christmas to all and to all a good night!"

-- Joe and Joyce Waters

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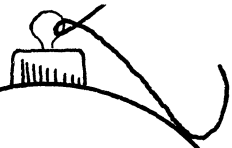

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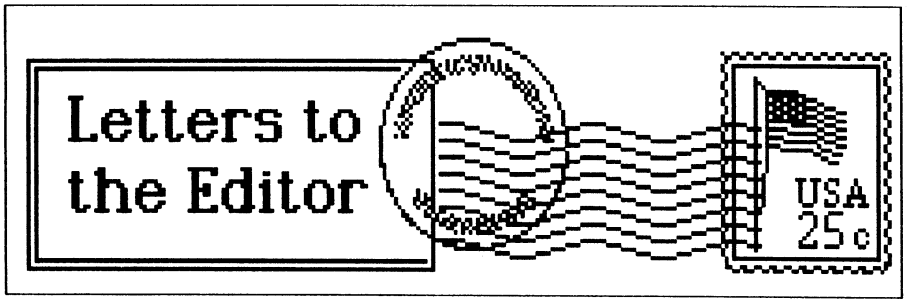

Lost in the Mail?

Dear Joyce,

Thanks for your kind attention to my subscription problems. I received the September issue on 9/7 and the back issues on 9/10 so everything is back on track.

The September issue was in perfect condition. In the past 6 months, several issues have arrived in rather a beat up condition. Talking to some friends who work in the Post Office down here, I am inclined to believe the problem is local and, perhaps, explains the disappearance of the last several issues. I suspect most of your subscription complaints can be attributed to local conditions.

The above-mentioned defects have frequently occurred with other magazines, etc. too.

While I'm writing this, I may as well express my satisfaction with *Current Notes.* I am just starting a first renewal of my subscription. The first year was the result of seeing a copy brought in to a local Atari meeting by Bob Doctor of St. James City. Subsequently, Mr. Doctor switched to IBM and I acquired a great many of his back issues--back to October 1985.

All I can say is that somebody is doing one hell of a great job. Since Joe Waters is the name at the top of the masthead, I guess I'll have to lay the blame on him. Congratulations, and keep on with the Atari BIG Miracle--*Current Notes*!

Frank E. Kweder
Ft. Myers, FL

[Thank you for your kind words Frank. I'm glad your issues did arrive OK. It's hard to determine what happens sometimes. We print out the mailing listing right after we print the labels so we have a record for each issue. However, there are many opportunities for problems. The printer must apply the labels, they must stay on through, in many cases, several post offices, they must remain legible, and the postman must deliver the issue. Most of the time, all this works fine. But occassionally, an issue does get lost.

All readers should know, however, that if they run into any problems--the issue does not arrive, it arrives all mangled up, or it arrives with a page missing or some such defect--just give us a call and we will send out a replacement. Similarly, if any reader has ANY problems with his/her subscription, just drop us a line or give us a call (703-450-4761) and we will correct the problem. -Joe W]

An Unbiased Look

Dear Joe:

I would like to take this opportunity to commend you and your staff's efforts in producing such a valuable resource for Atari computer owners. I consider CURRENT NOTES and ST INFORMER to be the most useful publications available for information to support my 520ST. Your writers do an excellent job of giving an unbiased look at the various software and peripherals available.

My favorite articles have been those that appear monthly by David Small, Jeff Greenblatt, and Frank Sommers. I also found the review of the HP Deskjet to be most timely. A copy of the review was forwarded to my company's Information Center Department and was, I believe, a factor in the approval of my request for a Deskjet to use with my ST at work.

One area of the ST that seems to have lost some steam lately is the ability for MS-DOS emulation. As a registered user of pc-ditto, I am most interested in software revisions and hardware enhancements that will make running DOS software more practical. No doubt there are many others with similar curiosities.

Again, keep up the great work.

Jack Link
Crestwood, KY

Canadian Postage

Dear Sir,

I have a question regarding your subscription rates to Canadian subscribers. I enjoy your magazine very much and have just renewed my subscription for an additional two years. To do this, I had to add $30 ($15/year) to cover "surface rate postage." I find it a bit hard to believe that it costs an additional $1.25 above US postage rates to mail *Current Notes* to Canada. I'm just wondering why the additional postage charges are so high for Canadian subscribers. Thank you.

Ken Watson
ELsa, Yukon,
Canada

Dear Ken,

I'm glad you asked about the subscription rates since many other Canadian subscribers may also wonder about the difference. If everything were mailed out 1st class, there wouldn't be such a difference. A typical issue of CN weighs 6.2 oz. Adding an envelope

brings the weight to just under 7 oz. Postage to mail out CN 1st class would be $1.45 (plus about $0.12 for an envelope for a total cost of $1.57). Fortunately, we do not mail out CN 1st class but rather mail at 2nd class postage rates. The cost of mailing that same issue at 2nd class rates is about $0.16 per copy or $1.62 per year. We mail at 2nd class rates and our subscription price is based on those rates.

We cannot, however, mail 2nd class to Canada (or any other foreign country for that matter). We can mail 1st class or, since we are a publication, take advantage of lower postal rates for "printed matter." 1st class (or AIR MAIL rates) to Canada under the "printed matter" tables are $1.62 for a 7 oz. package. Adding an envelope (required for all foreign mail) means total air mail postage cost for a year is about $17.40. "Surface rates" are a little cheaper. There is no 7 oz. option here, however, so we must mail at the 8 oz. rate which is $1.46 for Canada ($1.56 for other countries). Adding the envelope cost yields a total postage cost of $15.80 per year. That is the reason we charged you an additional $15 for your subscription.

There is not a very great difference between "Air Mail" and "Surface Rates" to Canada. I also suspect there is not a very great difference in the amount of time it takes "surface" mail to reach Canada. Note that this is not true for many other countries. It takes about three months for CN to reach Australia when mailed at surface rates. That is why some foreign subscribers are willing to pay the relatively high air mail postage rates ($4.64 for a single issue to Australia, Asia, or the Middle East, for example) to assure CN arrives in a timely manner.

So, the bottom line is that, even though foreign subscriptions prices are considerably higher, the extra cost is, indeed, entirely for postage. CN revenue on foreign subscriptions is the same, or actually lower, than it is on domestic subscriptions. –Joe W.

Hardware Help

Dear Sirs,

Please renew my subscription to *Current Notes*. I really enjoy the magazine and am especially grateful that it is produced so close to my home state. It is a quality magazine with no junk and I find myself reading it thoroughly and going back to it very often. I really am a fan of your magazine and it makes us ST users really glad to have this type of reference available. Thanks for giving us what we want at an honest price!

I would also like to mention an article I would like to see written. I have been having trouble with putting together compatible ST drive systems together for my computer. I think that if you were to do an article on which drives work, which need modified to be made to work and which just won't work, it sure would help folks like us that want to upgrade our machines using third party drives a whole lot happier and less nervous. I think I have my particular problem solved, but I have had some problems with drive cables. I have two 3.5" floppies in a case from IB Computer, and the cable I need goes from the ST disk port into the case and terminates in two 34 pin connectors. I just bought a cable for $46 and it didn't work when I got it. I finally got it to work after taking it apart and soldering it. But $46 is very costly for a drive cable and I could do it myself if I had the specs. Please address these issues, because I am sure there are many in the ST community that could make use of this information.

Mike French
Hedgesville, WV

[Well, CN readers, you've read Mike's request. Anyone want to offer their suggestions? Send your response to our ST Editor, Frank Sommers. –Joe W]

Curling Up with CN

Dear Sir:

I would like to compliment you on an excellent publication. I subscribe to several Atari and ST magazines. The one I most enjoy curling up with is your's.

While I enjoy the news and reviews, I especially like the way your writers call it as they see it. While others hestiate and gloss over what's happening, I feel that when I have read Current Notes, I have a pretty good idea of what's going on in the land of Atari.

Keep up the good work and thanks for all the excellent editions I've already received.

Larry Shackelford
Middletown, OH

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A Year of Nothing New?

Wait Until Next Year

Like an echo from the expo halls of the past, meaning last year at Comdex, the voice of Jack Tramiel could be heard offering apologies for what Atari didn't have to show or sell, and suggesting, "I assure you, next year will be better." For the non-jaded, this was heard as a positive statement, an encouraging one. Though nothing that Atari had shown last year associated with the ST and Mega ST's could as yet be found in our offices or homes, and though the consensus seemed to be that Atari, itself, had nothing new to offer for sale at this Comdex, defections from the loyal ranks of Atari-addicted users are scarce to non-existant. Of *Current Notes*' 70-odd authors, only one has put his machine on the bloc and purchased a more expensive Macintosh rig. This refusal to jump ship continues despite mounting cries about developers, dealers, and at least one major software firm turning their backs on the limited, if not shrinking, market that Atari enjoys in these United States.

Why? Because it is still one of the best and brightest of machines available. There are the IBM and Macintosh emulations (i.e. *pc-Ditto,* and *Magic Sac/Spectre 128*). There are the CAD programs, drawing and music programs, entertainment programs from Europe, database and spreadsheet programs, with a host of other peripherals, including hard drives and laser printers. All these have kept users who shout about the lack of new products, on the defensive with their spouses about the deep depletions Atari has made in their checkbooks in this the Year of Nothing New. In fact, in some families there are parents and wives and husbands praying that Jack Tramiel won't come out with "something new" for a machine already gorged on that fastest of fast foods, called Family Finances.

Nothing New, But Wow!

The Gold Room. Not in the main hall. Not in a place where anybody who wasn't buying or selling Atari's would elect to go. So, no passersby to convert. Only old fans. But crowded. Yes, the away-from-the-center-of-attraction Atari booth was as crowded throughout Comdex as any other booth. The Atari user, dealer, and distributor may be in a swivet of frustration about what the ST's might have been had The Money Man at Atari been willing to bet more of his bundle on it. But as one dealer commented, "Nobody comes into my store that gets as enthusiastic about his/her computer as the Atari users do. The loyalty to that machine is fantastic."

And so it was at Comdex. As we've noted above, there really wasn't any new hardware from Atari that you could touch and plan to buy for Christmas. But the enthusiasm and the palpable excitement about what might be coming "soon" was still making the cauldron roil and boil.

There was a PostScript clone, an ST Bernoulli box, talk of a FAX machine, a robotics kit, rumours of high rez color monitors and optical character readers, and a multi-line device costumed like a local area network, along with *Desk Set II*, and music making programs and peripherals a bunch.

A Plastic Wrap Laptop

In the face of this, Atari held a private party for "developers," showing them "Stacey," the ST laptop. There were two versions of it, the Alpha and the Beta. One programmer commented that you needed a big lap, a strong lap for the overly large Alpha version. Though it had hardware insides, it obviously was a long way from being marketable. The smaller version was a foam plastic mockup of what the device would actually look like when it was finished. Developers were told that it would be selling in Europe in the 2nd quarter of '89 and in the 3rd in the U.S. Voices inside Atari tagged this as "a gross misstatement", or mis-estimate, if you will, intended to start developers fighting to turn out products for it. Oh, my, what a tangled web we weave when first we practice to....

Waiting for Godot & the EST

When Atari was repeatedly queried about the 68030 machine, they doggedly maintained that they had nothing to say about it and would not until it was ready for sale and distribution. Some suggest that when it appears, one version of it will be the EST, the enhanced ST, or even the TT. That said, there were reports of a European developer showing among its goodies, a "Powerhouse ST," that was described as having the same specs assigned to the EST in various European

appeared several weeks before Comdex, when many if not all thought it would be shown there. Those in the know claim that the machine shown at the Hannover expo last winter and which appeared ready for production and marketing was terminated with extreme prejudice after six computers had been made, tested and found wanting. Reportedly the machine used a 68020 chip. The version that may or may not ever appear, which is now under development, is the talked-about 68030 machine that ostensibly will have a UNIX type operating system, and may or may not be attachable/useable with your Mega. Atari hopes that at least one version of it will be. We find reports that it will start selling in Europe in the Ist quarter of next year overly optimistic. One question that you might ask: Is Atari's record of support up to marketing a machine that is a new and novel computing device requiring extensive support to insure market confidence in it?

Atari Has Been Cloned!

If word of a "Powerhouse ST" sets you to pondering, how about a clone of the ST! Yes, runners are returning from the show maintaining that they saw in "one part of the hall," a European firm that was showing a small box about the size of a hard drive that had a co-processor and blitter slot and was a fully compatible ST clone without proprietary chips. No price data were available and no data on where you would get the chips to power it other than from Atari. It was a tidy little rack mounted ST that probably could have various industrial uses.

86's Dominated Comdex

They were every where. Everybody had a 286 or 386 computer to demonstrate. Atari's versions, the PC 4 and PC 5, were also there, if not frontispieced. Word has it that they are not competitive in price or power with other clones that overpowered the show. As reported previously, only one thousand will be stealthed into the U.S. direct to Federated where, on a discount basis, they may have a chance. Atari apparently realizes finally that they are "too little and too late," and can't be priced low enough to be competitive in the mass market without selling them at a loss.

Fearful CEO'S

Yes, the computer buck$$ usually stop at the chief executive officer's door. Seldom is seen a workstation in his office. Yet often here is where the critical, highest level, heaviest impact editing goes on. The pencil-line x-outs, the steely sharp notations in the margins presaging a firm hand and a tightly organized mind, the changes that impact down the line in the form of hours of additional work to reorder presentations. All this is now brought about with only carbon & fiber, paper and pencil. "NO ELECTRONS HERE" is the unprinted sign hanging on most president's doors. Why? Because our leaders, for the most part, evolved from the non-computer generation, the guys that never played an arcade game or a computer shoot-em-up. Well, Wang, the earliest of office computer vendors hopes to change all that. Their new pen pal for top brass is a simple $2,000 electron tablet that lies flat on your desk with a light pen attached (and obviously also connected to a local area network). The CEO simply calls up the latest proposal, "slashes and burns" his way thru it with the light pen and slick, it's back on your desk's workstation, with notations as well as oral instructions, if he elects to detail additional thoughts with a voice message on the file. So open your hearts and minds, CEO's, and ask yourselves, "Won't this increase my productivity?"

Well that's another story, which CN author, John Barnes, analyzes in the next issue.

The Pro Is Back

Have you wondered where the oldest and one of the best of the backup copy programs has been these many months? Well, *ProCopy* from ProCo Products (P.O. Box 665, Chepachet, R.I. 02814; (800-843-1223) is back, after 13 months of fighting to update their version 1.50 of October 1987. One of the more conscientious software companies about getting updates to their customers, ProCo has been doing battle low these many months with the ingenious demons of European game software, who have invented protects unknown to the common mind. Never one to relent, Ed Boisvert, head of the company, has consistently tried to have each upgrade handle all existing software at the time the upgrade is released. This has often meant rechanges right up until the time the program goes into production, packaging and mailing. For a while at the beginning of this year, Boisvert thought they might have to go to a hardware solution, so difficut were certain bits of code to copy. Compounding the problem that confronts you when you are turning out a product that is drive and chip sensitive, are the numerous and different drives available for the ST, not to mention the differing versions of the ST and Mega ST's that now exist and the birth of the new ROM operating system. ProCo believes it has conquered all of these foes, while admitting that it hasn't been able to test every piece of software that is still coming in from Europe. But the not-to-be-copied *Dungeon Master's, Dive Bomber's, Goldrunner II's, Droids',* and the rest are for the moment

subdued. If you like to have several versions of your favorite adventure game saved to different disks as you go along, then you'll want *Pro-Copy v. 1.60.*

Fleet Street U.S.A.

Who will win the bug wars? Drop three coins in the fountain, and guess. *Page Stream*, alias *Publishing Partner Professional,* has started shipping, complete with a list of 20 bugs and something of a speed problem, e.g. on an Atari laser, a page heavy with graphics can take up to five minutes to calculate and print. *Calamus* again caused a stir, when it was displayed at Comdex. It has started shipping with a $299 price tag, and reportedly all the power a desktop can handle. Just off the boat and flying straight to Michtron is *Fleet Street Publisher V-2.0.* Rob Washburn, Michtron's Director of Operations, hopes to have it in your hands for $150 to put under the Xmas tree. It will have 80 fonts aboard, and its developer maintains it is bug free. If so, it should emerge the winner.

What Was & What Will Be

There was a robotics kit that plugged into your Mega cartridge slot and allowed you to control robot devices. *UltraScript* was being demoed, looking classy, and ready for release "in early '89." It is described as capable of putting a remarkable array of *PostScript* type fonts at your disposal. A description of an optical character reader attached to a Navarone scanner was mouth watering and prepared you to believe that a European company who claimed it was looking for a U.S. distributor might actually produce and market a FAX machine for the ST for less than $1,500 in 1989. Or a Scandanavian company that maintained it had a scanner that could scan and simultaneously translate the text using a 286 computer. Back to reality, *DynaCad* was being used to generate five foot by six foot E-size drawings. Big names in the world of Midi were *Masterlink*, and *Master Track, Jr.* and *Pro*, selling for $129.95 and $349.95 with no release date but assurances that version 3.0 would have SMPTE. And *Final Cut,* the editor for synthesizer arrangements to sell at $89.95.

Michtron, Supra & TOS

Well, Michtron was no longer promoting *GFA Basic.* Michtron states that the German company intends to set up an independent U.S. company to distribute its products. " They were very happy with the large checks we were sending them," Michtron adds. And finally, word is out on the street that Supra Corp. has stopped developing new products for the Atari and will now direct its energies to the Amiga. Reason? Lack of support from Atari.

Len Tramiel is back in charge of the new TOS. The question, however, arises whether that will speed its wending its way into your hands and machines. After all, Len was the one who was seen and heard ranging the booths at Comdex, declaring the products to be junk, and announcing that Atari was now convinced that U.S. computer consumers, versus European buyers, would not buy anything new or inventive from Atari. And then, by implication, that this was why Atari would not try initially to market the Abaq, now named the ATW (Atari Workstation) in this country.

Promised Lan vs Nitelight

Atari 365 days ago showed a local area network system called "Promised Lan." That was the last time we saw the promise. This year we have a half-promise from Nitelight. Their pseudo "lan" is really a multi-line BBS. With an RS 232 pack that can take eight lines, you have a device that would seem to accomodate a network of eight, i.e. eight people who can be on-line with each other, but can they control a common memory device independently of each other?

pc-Ditto Has Surprises

With a keen sense of "positioning," Atari purportedly tried to have two biggies in the ST world, *pc-Ditto* and *Spectre 128* bunk together at the Atari corral. The two sponsers of the two elite software products instead decided to take separate booths outside of the Atari realm. *Sprectre 128, a* hardware product, is a run-a-way success, as most of you know, giving the ST access to the latest and best of the MacIntosh. Bill Teal's unique ST contribution, an IBM software emulation of the IBM, has only lacked in speed for certain time conscious programs. Summer whispers persisted that soon we would see a disk update that would turn the turtle into a hare. Racing along with these rumors was Kenneth George's accelerator board that would do it all. Teal, who enjoys a reputation for authoring a product that performs as advertised and on schedule, has not let anybody read his lips for months. But please, do not evince surprise if the new year should see a Teal box, not an accelerator board, that connects to your ST and runs it a bit faster than an IBM AT with total compatibility. That is comprehensible and impressive but not really new magic, but what about? What about that package with a high resolution color monitor, a color monitor sharper and crisper than your present monochrome screen, and by quite a bit, by 1024 x 768? Some yawn and say, "But such a monitor would cost $2,000. Who needs it?" Would an under $1,000 tag smother that yawn? But don't ask Teal. He appears to be too honest an electric knight to even nod and smile at such a probe.

Sharper Than Your TV

Those of you who read the review of GenLock by Bill Moes in the last issue may be salivating about when John Russel's product will receive FCC approval and be up and visible on your monitor, i.e. sight bites from your TV that is. Well, what about a monitor screen that enhances and makes the image sharper than it was on the TV screen from whence it is captured? It isn't here yet, but Ward Johnson of Moniterm reportedly maintains, that while it is impossible to do with Commodore it is "easy on an Atari." Maybe Moniterm and pc-Ditto should have a talk.

European Xmas

Super Hangon by Sega is a super game of the *Pole Position* genre, but this time you are sweeping along on a racing motor bike, banking sharply on the curves. *Numero 10*, despite its Spanish name is a French version of a soccer game by Image. It just may be one of the best. *All Aboard* by Bay Cities Software is a unique narrow-gauge-train construction set. Unique because you can design your own freights, track and curves. Then plop with the mouse and they're chugging around your layout, crashing into a second oncoming passenger train, if your heart still dwells on such youthful destruction. And *Road Raider* if post nuclear-war highway violence is your bag. Your bright red armoured Corvette is indestructible, or almost.

But the best of the bag full of Europe's best is a 4-disk adventure by the father of *Obliterator* and *Barbarian,* Psygnosis. *Chrono Quest* is an adventure gamer's must. The graphics taking you inside a modern English castle and play action are of a superior level.

May your holidays be joyous, indeed!

Tips 'N' Traps

Here are answers submitted by our readers to questions presented earlier in this column. My apologies for the long gap in coverage. I have had some volunteers for this column and, hopefully, we will be able to resurrect Tips 'N' Traps next year. -Joe Waters

The Pawn

Q. Could anyone "shed some light" on how (and where) to find what the guru wants??

--Dave Lee

A. This could take awhile depending on how far you are in the rest of the game. Cover the wristband so he stops laughing at you and gives you the bowl. Head for the snow covered plateau beyond the boulder. Use the bowl to get some snow, it melts into water, of course. Then, give the guru his bowl. You find the three stones you need in a pouch at the forest clearing tree stump. Mix them and you get your light.

--"Crown Phoenix"

Dungeon Master

Q. How do you get past the "Test Your Strength" blue mist on level 6?

--"Raven"

A. Shoot an arrow through the blue mist, then go back to hall and go straight to the hall, on the left. Surprise!

--Shane

Q. After you have the third Ra key, is it necessary to keep going or can you just turn around and go back up to level 7? I tried to keep going, but ran into two knights that I can't kill. Does anyone know an easy way to kill them?

--"Raven"

A. On level 12 at the two knights, you can't kill, run but don't get too far ahead. There will be a point where they can't pass. Wait there and fight, if you get hurt, move to the side and sleep or use a "vi" potion. P.S. They are easy with the handcleave, speedbow, and mourningstar.

--Shane

Space Quest

Q. How do you get past the door in front of that little volcano, and next to the pit with the green tentacles? Also, where do you get the "fizzy" stuff to kill Orat?

--Jim Stevenson

A. There is a rock in the room where you get off the lift which brings you into the caverns. Get it, and drop it in the geyser. The door will open. Watch out for the acid later on. Next, there are two ways to kill Orat. I did not realize any "fizzy stuff" until after I solved the game. You can let the spider-droid run into him, or search your pod for a survival kit, in which you will find a can of H2, dehydrated water. Toss it in his mouth. Blutt!

--Overload

Beyond Zork

Q. (1) How do you get out of the cellar in the pub? I gotevery-thing in it, but I can't get out. (2) How do you cross the bridge, or does the umbrella serve a purpose when it's broken? (3) Does anyone know the answer to the riddle on the cliff (My tines be long, etc.)

--"Max Quordlepleen"

A. (1) Cellar--you need the scroll of recall. When you cast, the word, you will teleport there (from anywhere). (2) Bridge--befriend the Pterodactyl, (I just named him Bob) by using anesthesia and Spenceweed. Then levitate the saddle out of the stable and put it on Bob. You can fly him across the bridge to get the umbrella (useless to me so far). (3) Riddle--use your head, man! Lightning!!!

--Overload

CURRENT NOTES ST LIBRARY

[Note: the programs on these disks are either public domain, or copyrighted but distributed freely to the public (e.g. AtariWriter and NEOCHROME), or shareware products where the authors would like an additional payment if you decide you like their products. Numbers not listed have been discontinued. Disk numbers with a 'D', e.g. "202D", indicated a double-sided disk. Disks are $4/each. Include $1 for every 6 disks for postage. Order from CURRENT NOTES LIBRARY, 122 N. Johnson Rd., Sterling, VA 22170.]

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CN PD DISK BOXES

Each CN disk box includes 10 public domain disks drawn from the CN PD Library. We have tried to be selective and include only the best in PD software. Each box costs $35. + $2 S&H.

GAME BOX #1 (C). 10 disks filled with the best in PD games for the ST color system: (1) Jumptster, Score4, Sensori, Staggravation, Twogame, (2) Bgammon, Boggle12, Checkers, Daleks, Tripple Yahtzee, Twixt, (3) Monopoly, (4) Wheel of Fortune, (5) Barnyard, Kidmusic, Kidnotes, Kidpiano, Kidsketch, Potato, (6) Escape, Hacman, (7) Darts, Hero, Stonedelux, (8) Startrek, (9) Azarian, Shanghai Demo, and (10) ST Vegas.

GAME BOX #2 (M). 10 disks filled with PD games for the ST monochrome system: (1) PuzzlePuzzle, (2) Monopool, Krabat, (3) Shanghai Demo, (4) larn2, ogre, ataritrek, maze maker, checkers, battleship, window ball, (5) Eamon Adventure Games, (6) Spacewar, Megaroids, Runner, and Squixx, (7) Adventure writing system, Daleks, Krabat2, Stocks and Bonds, Eliminator, Breakout, and Reversi, (8) Cribbage, Draw Poker, Mega Maze, (9) Bog, Core Wars, Escape, and (10) Anduril, Battleburg, Diamond Miner, Invaders, and The Snafu Principles.. [Disks drawn from CN 54, 80, 135, 139, 153, 212, 213, 230, 240, and 269.]

MUSIC BOX #1. Over 400 songs for use with Music Studio and 30+ songs for use with Music Construction Set. PD players included so you do not need Music Studio to enjoy the music. [Includes CN #60, 114, 196, 197, 198, 199, 216, 217, 237, and 244.]

CLIP ART BOX #1. 10 disks filled with clip art for your desktop publishing needs. Note: art work drawn from the best pictures in CN 147, 158, 159, 160, 239, 245, 246, 247, 248, 249, and 150.

PASCAL/MODULA-2 BOX #1. 10 disks with source code to programs written in Pascal and Modula-2. Use these examples to help you learn or include the routines in your own programs. [Includes CN 31, 49, 83, 92, 93, 110, 111, 177, 232, and 299.]

C PROGRAM BOX #1. 10 disks or C source code. Use these examples to help you learn the language. [CN 33, 82, 123, 133, 156, 171, 223, 277D, and 298.]

ST LANGUAGE BOX #1. Tired of Atari Basic? Try Forth, Forthmacs, Icon, Xlisp, Toy Prolog, Little Prolog, C, and ST Xformer. Includes an editor disk. [CN 53, 71, 123, 124, 181, 224, 262D, 263, 277D, and 163.]

NEO/DEGAS PICTURE BOX #1. Well over 200 Neo and Degas pictures. Includes Neochrome and various picture slide shows and utilities.. [Material drawn from CN 14, 40, 41, 42, 51, 52, 65, 75, 96, 183, and 268D.]

SHOW OFF BOX #1. (C) Use these disks to "show off" the special color, animation, and digitized sound capabilities of your ST. Includes the famous Fuji Boink, Shinny Bubbles, SteelyBoink, Spheres! Demo, Space Probe, Cyberscape, and more. Requires 1MB and DS drive. [Demos taken from CN 50, 90, 128D, 129, 151D, 173D, 227D, 78D, 134, 218D, 259]

* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *

UTILITIES

#36: DESK ACCESSORIES. TI-59 calc, calendar, digi clocks, ramdisks, free ram, screen snapshot, background colors, sector ed, games, ST Tips.

#61: PRINTER DRIVERS. 1st Word (ascii, bro10p, bro12pt, bro15pt, brohr15, epfx80, esfx80, epsix80, lq800, oki02, oki192, pan109, prortr, pr1215, 1stnx10), Degas (panson, cgp220, cti300, epson3, jx80c, ml193, ml84, ml93, necp3b, necp3c, oki20b, oki20c, pj1080, prowtr, sg10). Star and Gemini fonts (computer, cut, french1, olde, outline, russ1, smooth, stylish). spool33k.prg; prtspool.ttp.

#72: UTILITY NO.4. Format & copy 400K and 800K; library & delibrar; make512 & make1meg; Fn Key Labels; muscnvrt; desk Acc(cli, fastram, fortune, prints, deskman); fileprint; proff; print hi-res on color system.

#94: UTILITY NO.7. Make clipboard acc, analyze dBMAN command files, print out strips of picture files, banner, marque, blast (fast display of Pix & Neo files), Mac to Atari, Picdex, tiny prints.

#102: UTILITY NO.9. Early ver of Apple II emulator, bulk erase, diskdir. printer, disassemble, ramdisks (eternal, yard), disk format acc., ram disk loader, print disk labels, monitor st (debugging tool).

#107: ST RAM DISKS. 25 Ramdisks, 7 Auto Loaders (fdcopier, intramdk, loadram, eternal, yard, ultcopy, fastramd, autoramd, mike5, ...)

#113: UTILITY NO.10. TURTLE hard disk backup utility; PROGCALC programmable calculator; UNDELETER undelete your files; FORMAT3; VIDCOL.PRG convert Degas Elite files to ASCII simulations of Vidtex for viewing by Flash.

#117: ST DESK ACC NO. 2. Acc load, eternal, format acc, index, kalklock, mobzdil2, new word, startup1.1.

#121: UTILITY NO. 11. address book, text browser, arxx, format.gem, gem font editor, font loading acc, start1.1

#126: PUB PARTNER UTILITIES. Helvetic and Normal fonts with 18 various printer drivers including Epson, Gemini, Bluechip, Okidata, T321F, SB10F, LQ800F, SMM804, C8510A.

#127: ST FONT EDITORS/LOADERS. Font Loader (High-res only), Gem Font Editor, Ver 1.11, and FED Font Editor.

#131: UTILITY NO.12. Programmer's Utility disk: uudecode, uuencode, bucket, kill, scach, make, setinit, verify, volume, 1_filepr, case, mase, ...)

#132: UTILITY NO.13. Disk library program (Diskcat), two text editors (less & vix), disk copy programs (autodisk, dcopy), startgem, access, rocp.

#144: UTILITY NO.14. Alarm clock acc, C shell, buffer setup prrg., coldboot.tos, display any res DEGAS on any res monitor, script for DEGAS slide show, harddisk auto boot, multiple file printer, mouse ed., spelling checker, rambuffr.acc

#145: UTILITY NO.15. ASL (print out multiple documents), GULAM (command line interpreter), HDSCAN (selectively backup hard disk), LABELS (disk label prg), START-GEM (start GEM prgs from AUTO),...

#154: UTILITY NO.16. MODULA-2 Utilities: context2 Modula-2 editor; m2print ("pretty print" program);makefile utility; qcopy (source for disk copier prg); and m2proc (displays procedures).

#155: UTILITY NO.17. dcopy20; diskfix; megablit drawing prg; most (view text files); qcopy; quiklbl2 (quick disk labels); ymodem batch accessory.

#162: HARD DISK UTILITIES. Directory count (gets around 40 folder limit); C source to HD directory; supra ver 2.61 utilities; turtle HD backup ver 2.15; add multiple HD to supra.)

#166: UTILITY NO.18. disk editor, musical formatter (gercopy), multiple formats (xutility), modify seek rates for 5 1/4" drives.

#185: UTILITY NO.19. Analyze copy protection (diskmech), format disks for Magic Sac, IBM, ST normal/fast read, normal/extended format (dc formatter 2.2), ST maintenance programs (arundisc, brundisc, dspeed, memst1, priveye), v2 of super boot.

#206: UTILITY NO.20. Set screen/text colors & save desktop.inf files for each resolution (Bootup V2.05), Epson font editor; calculator and limited screen plotter in one; fast disk copier; graphic utilities: convert IFF files to comp. Spectrum; show Spectrum, Degas, and Neo pics from one slide prg, convert AIM to Degas and Degas to AIM.

#220: UTILITY NO.21: Your First Utility Disk. Micro-Time Alarm Clock, ST Ramdisk and Printer Buffer, Clock/Calendar, ASCII

Printout, DeARChiver, Disk Manager, Disk Directory Listing Prg, and Acc Selector and Resolution setter.

#221: UTILITY NO.22. Arcshell V1.8, ARC Acc, dcformat acc, diskfree (speeds up gemdos diskfree() fn), foldrxxx (take care of 40 folder limit), fselv55 (replace GEM file selector box), superboot 3.2 (all-in-one type boot program).

#222: Desk Pak Plus. (Shareware) 10 desk acc in a single file: clock, calendar, phone book, calculator, appointments, free ram, note pad, copy file, delete file, desktop.

#229: Easy Draw Utility Disk. Fonts: (Chicago 7-36, Courier 7-36, Calig 7-36), Easy Draw Art (18 GEM pics: assissi, box_brd, callig, clip-tmp, dailycal, disk_lbl2, hi-tech, line-brd, pd-art-1, pd-art-2, rocky, scrolbrd, swiss, vhs-lbl).

#234: UTILITY NO.23. ST Floppy Disk Manager V1.0/2.0 (dskscan1), deluxe slide-show V2.0 (dslide2), (Atari ST File System checker/repairer, V1.1 and File System Compacter (hdoptimz), Virus killer prg (penicilin), (Super Directory data file reader (sddfr12).

#238: PUB PARTNER UTILITY NO.2. New PP fonts (cyrillic, helvetic, hudson, and saturn). Printer drivers (hpd, hpf, lq1000f, necp7d, necp7f, and ps-plus). Font editor (w/docs) for creating your own PP fonts.

#242: UTILITY NO.24. ARC Shell II, V1.91, Desk Manager V2.1 allows greater control on system bootup. Ledbetter Utilities, Manager prg for those that use Tempus ed with TDI Modula-2 package (m2grv2), editor of VT52 graphics (vt pro), Redirect Alt-Help key to save screen in Degas format (degasave).

#253: UTILITY NO.25. V6 of item selector (fselv60), disk formatter (cssformt), TOS patch to speed up hard disk writes, backup protected disks, new intersect ramdisk, check disks for viruses, translate IBM Wordstar to First Word.

#254: UTILITY NO.26: Graphic Utilities. Various conversion prgs (Spectrum to Degas to Neo, etc), display all 3 Degas on color or mono, save screen as Degas pic, Degas fonts to GDOS, Pic Switch V7, stuff/unstuff Tiny pics, display GIF format files.

#255: UTILITY NO.27: Arc & Arc Shell. Version 5.21 of arc.ttp and share program ArcShell II (Ver 1.95 & 1.96). Includes all C source code to IBM version of ARC.

#260: YOUR 2ND UTILITY DISK. Two great utilities by J.A. Wrotniak: Address Book (acc and prg) and Zap-Card (simple data base program ideal for quotations, record collections, recipies, etc.) All docs included.

#264: XFORMER UTILITY DISK. Disk for **use with the XFORMER** 8-bit emulator (CN #263). Contains DS 8-bit disk w/patcv-hed Atari DOS to provide double density DOS for use with XFORMER. Includes Turbo Basic.

#276: DISK CATALOGER and LABEL PRINTER. Compiled dBMAN program. Shareware by Saraware).

#279: ATARI SLM804 LASER DISK. Diablo Emulator 1.2, GDOS Boot 1.2, LCa-melot font for Laser.

TERMINAL PROGRAMS

#88A: UNITERM VT102 EMULATOR, Version 1.7B. (UNITERM emulates VT102/220 text terminals and Tektronix's 4014 graphics terminal. Includes XModem and KERMIT protocols.)

#180. STARNET BBS. Bulletin Board System with xmodem protocol.

#265: VANTERM, Ver. 3.71. A full-featured terminal program with xmodem, ymodem, and internal ARC support. This update adds Vidtex graphics and Shadow support.

APPLICATIONS

#14: NEOCHROME. Atari point Program, docs, pictures. (Color only)

#103: SKYMAP. (mono) 1,560 of the brightest stars. Display map of stars, find a particular star, or identify a particular star.

#163: EDITOR DISK. Includes PROEDIT by Jerry Cole: general purpose programming editor with outline feature; and ConTEXT by Don Milne, designed for use with Modula-2, but a good editor with any language.

#165: LIBRARY PROGRAMS. Menu.prg, diskcat V1.3, turtle companion.

#176: ST WRITER ELITE, V2.52. Latest version. Supports multiple printers. English, German, and Spanish versions included. Complete Docs.

#192: MICROEMACS, VER 3.9. Text editor, includes MicroSPELL spelling checker.

#233: SHEET. Shareware spreadsheet program by Mr. Chor-ming Lung. Includes complete docs.

#241: VDOS (Virtual Disk Operating System). Shareware graphic interface for easier access to frequently used programs. Includes many command options frequently contained within command line interfaces.

#270: QUIZ PLUS. Computer Assisted instruction system let your ST teach you. Sample lessons provided instruction (w/ pictures). (C) NO MEGA.

#276: DISK CATALOGER AND LABEL PRINTER. (Shareware dBMAN program by Saraware).

ANALOG DISKS

All Analog/ST Log disks from April '86 to Nov. 88. Note: no disks issued between Oct '87 and Mar '88. For best use, these disks require you to have the corresponding issue of ST-Log for program documentation.

Price Schedule

If the total number of disks is 9 or less, the price is $4.00/disk; 10 or more, $3.80/disk; 20 or more, $3.60/disk; 30 or more, $3.40/disk; 40 or more, $3.20/.disk; 50 or more, $3.00/disk. Add $1 per every 6 disks (or fraction thereof) for shipping and handling up to a maximum of $6.00.

Note: **CN DISK BOXES** are $35 each plus $2 S&H.
Order from: CN Library, 122 N. Johnson Rd, Sterling, VA 22170.

CHRISTMAS SPECIAL

Any 10 Disks of your choice: $35.00 plus $2. S&H.

Complete listing in November, 1988 Current Notes, or write and ask for a complete catalog.

* NEW * NOVEMBER 1988

#277D: GNU C Compiler. An updated (double-sided) disk with the GNU C compiler, assembler, archiver, linker, library, documentation and a patch. (Source code on CN288-CN291). NOTE: return your copy of CN277 for a free replacement of this update. If you do not have DS drive, be sure to tell us.)

#280: LAMBERT PICS NO. 4. (PC1 & PC2: annivers, beach, bell22b, cost, cb, cigs, cover36, daleck, deadship, dune2, dune4, dune5, dune6, girl3, hdlburg, helper, indy500, jimminy), dslide.prg.

#281: MANUAL MAKER. Use GDOS and GDOS fonts to produce attractive manuals.

#282: DAMONOID. (C) Arcade game. NO MEGA.

#283: ADVENTURE GAMES. (System 5, Once a King, and El Bozo's City Out of Bounds).

#284: DESK ACC NO.3. Mouse doubler (double, triple, or quadruple movement of pointer relative to mouse movement), mouse editor (create animated mice), address book. Double Click Software's clock (V3.3), Formatter (V3.0), and Stuffer (put up to 32 accessories in one acc slot.)

#285D: STAR TREK (AVS). Original opening to Star Trek and a well done animation sequence. Incl. animate3.prg and playit.acc.
NOTE; with START's AVS program, this and the next two disks will show animation and play sounds simultaneously.

#286D: CALIFORNIA RAISINS (AVS). Famous singing raisons.

#287D: MIAMI VICE (AVS). Theme song played by animated band.
The following four disks contain the C source code for the GNU C compiler (CN #277D).

#288: GNU C Source: Make and Other Utilities.

#289: GNU C Source: Assembler

#290: GNU C Source: Compiler (Files 1 & 2) and header files.

#291: GNU C Source: Compiler (File 3); DIFF source and a collection of documentation.

* NEW * DECEMBER 1988

#292: LAMBERT PICS No. 5. Spectrum: 2kittens, blackbird, chipmunk, fox, owl; Degas Elite: drag108, dragcol, dragcovl, dragon2.

#293: DUNGEON MASTER MAPS. Maps and a cut'n'paste spell chart to aid you in your quest in Dungeon Master.

#294: KID GAMES NO. 3 (C). Kid Publish and Kid Shapes.

#295 STICKER (C/M). German disk labeling program with graphic images.

#296: STACATTO. Musical quiz game. Just listen or try and guess the song names as quickly as possible.

#297: AMAZE. Maze Construction Set. Draw an image boundary and then solve on screen or print out your maze.

#298: C-SOURCE DISK NO. 9. The source code to ST Xformer V1 and V2. (The Atari XE Basic emulator).

#299: PASCAL DISK NO. 5. Disk labeling program and referencing pixels on the screen.

Atari Advantage Collection Promo

In an effort to double its video game sales for the third consecutive year, Atari is kicking off an ongoing national program that rewards consumers who purchase Atari video games. The "Atari Advantage Collector Promotion" offers a variety of prizes to consumers based on the number of Atari video games they collect for any of three possible game systems (the 2600, the 7800, and the XE Game System).

To participate in the promotion, the consumer picks up a free "Atari Advantage" poster and catalog at a participating retailer. After each game purchase, the buyer attaches the "proof of purchase" seal to the poster. When enough games have been collected to earn a prize, the consumer sends the poster back to Atari for redemption.

For collecting five games, the purchaser receives a free Atari Advantage T-shirt. Fifteen games earns the buyer one free Atari video game cartridge for any Atari system. Twenty five games brings the consumer a reduced price on the purchase of Atari hardware: a 7800 for $25, or an XEGS or disk drive for $50.

The twenty-five gamers also become eligible to win a grand prize of a seven-day, expense-paid trip for two to California. This trip includes a tour of Atari headquarters. To become eligible, they also must submit a twenty-five word essay (quite a chore!) describing why they like Atari video games.

In addition to in-store displays, spot TV and newspaper advertising will be employed. Grand prize winners will be drawn every six months for the duration of the promotion.

Atari also is offering a **$50.00 rebate** to anyone who purchases an XE Game System by December 31. In order to qualify for the rebate, the purchaser must fill out a rebate offer coupon and mail it, together with the original bar code from the product box, along with a dated cash register receipt, to Atari XE Rebate Offer, P.O. Box 61657, Sunnyvale, CA 94088.

More on DOS XE

According to John Skruch, Atari's director of software development, a DOS XE disk and complete owner's manual can be purchased from Atari's Customer Relations Department for $10.00. The DOS will operate with any XL or XE computer and an 810, 1050, or XF551 Disk Drive. It will not work with a 400 or 800 computer. This is because part of the DOS resides under the OS ROM to maintain MEMLO compatibility with DOS 2.0.

[Atari Corporation, 1196 Borregas Avenue, Sunnyvale, CA 94088-3427, (408) 745-2000.]

Hi Tech Ships Datasoft Products

Hi Tech Expressions announced a new affiliated label program to make popular software titles from a wide variety of publishers available to the mass market. Its first agreement is with Datasoft, a recent acquisition of The Software Toolworks, Inc. Hi Tech shipped three Datasoft game titles (*BRUCE LEE*, *CONAN*, and *ZORRO*) last month with several more to follow.

In *BRUCE LEE*, players experience the power and glory of one of the greatest masters of the martial arts. The goal is to confront a barrage of vicious foes to penetrate the Evil Wizard's fortress and claim his fortunes. Game players in quest of wealth and glory will find it in *CONAN* as they seek and slay awesome creatures to destroy evil forces. Los Angeles circa 1800 is the setting for the legendary *ZORRO*. Players are challenged by screens of danger and excitement when they play the role of Zorro and attempt to rescue the fair maiden from the evil Sergeant Garcia.

One of Hi Tech's own recent products, *SWIMWARE*, unfortunately will not be available to Atari 8-bit users. This program allows users to create their own personalized calendars and to enhance them with vivid, digitized pictures of actual swimsuit models. At $9.95 this program looks to be a real bargain.

SWIMWARE is the first of Hi Tech's "WARE" (*PARTYWARE*, *CARDWARE*, *AWARDWARE*, etc.) products not to be published for the 8-bits. Perhaps a letter writing campaign is in order. Interested parties should write Hi Tech Creations, Inc., 584 Broadway, New York, NY 10001 or call (212) 941-1224.

Diamond OS News

Recently I received a new version of Reeve Software's 8-bit, ST-like desktop--*DIAMOND OS* (a.k.a. *DIAMOND GOS*, *DIAMOND GOE ST. Jr.*, etc.) from Shelley Merrill, president of USA Media, *DIAMOND'S* distributor. Side one of the disk contained a 64K XL/XE version of the desktop and a demo version of the *DIAMOND PAINT* program.

Side two contained a 130XE demo of the OS program as it eventually will be produced on a 64K cartridge. Because the 64K disk version already is up on pirate bulletin boards, USA understandably was reluctant to distribute to CN a completed disk copy of the more sophisticated version.

When the 64K cartridge version is released, it will contain the following improvements over the 64K disk version:

- ✓ Time/Date DOS support.
- ✓ Folder support.
- ✓ Exit to BASIC. Type DOS to return to Desktop.
- ✓ Added icons (e.g., Stop Sign for "Are you Sure?").
- ✓ Multiple (four) window handling.
- ✓ Window sliders.
- ✓ A calculator.
- ✓ Print or show text files.
- ✓ Direct icon or Icon disk copy.
- ✓ Rename file – redesigned.
- ✓ Screen printer dump.
- ✓ Save window positions.
- ✓ DOS 2.0 and 2.5 access program.
- ✓ Mouse or other driver configuration screen.
- ✓ Memory driver configuration screen.
- ✓ Delete files inside a folder.

Nine Titles From Branch Software

Clinton Branch, owner of Branch Software, told me in a recent telephone interview that he has released nine software titles for the Atari 8–bits (48K minimum). According to Mr. Branch, his company is dedicated to producing low–cost software for the neglected 8–bit market. Branch feels that his titles represent his best programming efforts over the past five years.

Mr. Branch would like to encourage other talented programmers to follow his lead and release their best efforts into the marketplace. He would be interested in marketing other original programming under the Branch Software label.

I've played *BLOCKAID*, and it's quite enjoyable, particularly for people who like BREAKOUT–type games. The screens are nicely drawn, and the action is exciting.

In future issues we will cover some of Mr. Branch's programs in more detail.

[Branch Software, 2750 Friday Lane, Cocoa, FL 32926; 407/631–7149. $9.98 each + $2.50 S&H for one or more disks.]

Origin Systems Shuns 8–Bits

Steve Morris of Origin Systems, distributor of the ULTIMA series, told me recently that his company had **no plans** for an Atari XE version of *ULTIMA V.* If there are enough ULTIMA fans out there, perhaps they might consider writing or calling Origin to register their complaints.

[Origin Systems, Inc., 136 Harvey Building B., Londonderry, NH 03053, (603) 644–3360.]

Some of the current Branch's titles:

BLOCKAID (destroy blocks in forty rooms while defending yourself against the villain Zieweunthu's fire balls; includes a construction set for designing additional screens)

TRIVIA QUIZ (an improved version of the public domain game)

AGENT 16 (three 007–like text adventures)

PUZZLE MAKER (generates word–search puzzles randomly from a 5,000–word dictionary or from words chosen by user; prints copies to printer)

FUN & GAMES 1 (includes a SCRABBLE–like game, a science fiction text adventure, and a horse racing game)

FUN & GAMES 2 (four games, including an arcade shoot–em–up, a reflex checker, a graphics version of the classic MASTERMIND, and a party mystery game)

FUN & GAMES 3 (five–card draw, craps, and a police–related text adventure)

UTILITIES 1 (the "ultimate" autoboot program, the "fastest" 130 XE disk back–up program, and two other useful programs)

LOTTO HELP! (geared toward helping the user psyche out the system for his state lottery).

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Gadgets by Small Goes Live

As of Oct. 19, 1988, Gadgets by Small has it's own Round Table (RT) on GEnie and other electronic information services. The main topic of this RT is of course the Spectre 128 Macintosh emulator.

Prior to this, the Spectre was in a single location in the ST Round Table under Category 12, Topic 9. The message base activity in Category 12, topic 9 was incredibly active. It opened up on Sept. 7, 1988 and by Oct, 19, 1988, the day the Gadgets by Small RT opened up, it contained 545 messages. It got to the point where I would log on a day later (or even hours later) and there were 40 new messages. Any questions that I thought I might answer were already taken care of within hours of the message being posted. Although Category 12, Topic 9 is closed, it's still available for reading through. Additionally, all 545 messages have been captured and archived (ARCed), and are available for downloading in the GEnie ST RT Library. The file was so large that it was broken into two files. File 8480 contains messages from Sept. 7th through Oct. 3rd; file 8481 contains messages from Oct. 3rd through Oct. 19th.

The activity hasn't slowed down much since the Gadgets by Small RT opened up. As of this writing here is a list of Categories and Topics in the Gadgets by Small RT.

Category 1: Welcome to Gadgets By Small BB

No. Subject
1 Category 1 information
2 Welcome to Gadgets By Small RT
3 Uploads to the software libraries
4 How to order Gadgets products
5 Navigating the BB
6 Gadgets By Small mailing list
7 Order status/Pipeline to Gadgets
8 Weekly online conferences
9 Dealer Inquiry
10 SPECTRE 128

Category 2 : The Pub

No.Subject
1 Category 2 information
2 Tell us about yourself
3 For Sale/Wanted
4 Rebirth of the Beer Topic

Category 3: Ask Dave Small

No. Subject
1 Category 3 information
2 Meg-a-minute HD backup
3 Suggestions/Wishlist
4 Magic Sac Q & A
5 Spectre 128 for the Amiga
7 Happy's Discovery Cart

Category 4 : Mac Software - Commercial

No.Subject
1 Category 4 information
2 MacPaint
3 MacWrite
4 Red Ryder Telecom program
5 HyperCard
6 Microsoft Word
7 HyperDA
8 VersaCad
9 SmartCom II
10 Word Perfect
11 Quick Keys
12 SuitCase
13 Reflex
14 CADD-CAM

Category 5 : Mac Software - PD/Shareware

No.Subject
1 Category 5 information
2 StuffIt
3 PackIt
4 Uploads to Gadgets library
5 Mac PD software sources
6 Problems w/files in Gadgets RT

Category 6 : Mac Software - System

No.Subject
1 Category 6 information
2 System and Finder
3 Software needing newer systems
4 MultiFinder

Category 7 : Spectre 128 for the Atari ST

No. Subject
1 Category 7 information
2 Spectre 128
3 Dot matrix printing
4 Laser/SLM-804 printing
5 HP DeskJet printing
6 Suggestions/Wishlist Spectre 128
7 Spectre 128 bug reports
8 Transverter
9 Spectre 128..faster than a Mac?
10 Hard Disks
11 Translator One
12 Printing crash pages/Orwell's
13 Where can I get Mac ROMs?
14 ROM Orders From Denny
15 MIDI software and Spectre 128
16 Postscript, anyone?
17 Read any good Mac books?
18 64K Spectre vs. 128K vs. Sac
19 Getting Started with Spectre 128
20 Scanners on Spectre 128

Here are a few examples of some of the Messages left in the Round Table:

Topic 12 Thu Oct 27, 1988
STACE [RT SysOp] at 19:27 EDT
Sub: SuitCase
A place to discuss the one truly "must have" Mac utility, Suitcase.
5 message(s) total.

****

Category 4, Topic 12
Message 1 Wed Oct 26, 1988
DARLAH (forwarded) Ok who has had problems with Suitcase II and what version. I just got the latest

version that was shipped this week and have had no problems. I like the addition of Font & Sound Valet and Font Harmony. Anyone have a crash from this?? Dave made me nervous when he mentioned his beta testers did but that must of been an earlier version...right??

Category 4, Topic 12
Message 2 Thu Oct 27, 1988
DAVESMALL (Forwarded) Well, it could just be my memory falling apart, but I recall several people saying Suitcase II failed. Is it my memory? You could scan the topic in the ST RT about this)
-- Thanks, Dave

Category 4, Topic 12
Message 3 Thu Oct 27, 1988
STACE [RT SysOp] at 19:28 EDT
Yep! Suitcase 2.0 works GREAT on the Spectre 128! Darlah,
Yes, trying to play any of the sounds in the System file causes, I believe a lock-up.
Mark

As you can see, if you have any questions about the Spectre 128, you can usually get a response from someone who is knowledgeable pretty quickly. It's also cheaper to log on to GEnie and ask your question, than to call Gadgets by Small in Colorado.

Mark Booth (STACE), the Gadgets by Small RT Sysop (along with Dave Small), does a fantastic job of maintaining the RT. Mark can usually answer any questions within hours of them being posted. The real tough ones are left for Dave to answer, who usually logs on every two or three days. Doug Wheeler (D.N.Wheeler), of Transverter fame, is also on quite often, and between Mark and Doug, most of the messages are fielded quickly. As for myself, I usually just log on and capture the latest messages just to see what's going on. Occasionally, I may put my 2 cents worth in. If you want to leave me a message, my username is "JNG". I'm usually on every night, when I'm not on travel that is.

The RT also has a Spectre 128 compatible PD and Shareware library that's just beginning to take off. All kinds of good stuff can be found in this library. Of course, if you're not satisfied with what is up in the library, you can always move over to the Mac RT where there are over 12,000 files available for downloading.

If you want to join the Gadgets by Small RT, just type "M690" at any menu prompt to go to the RT. There is no cost to join other than your online time.

If you are not a member of GEnie, in my opinion, it's the best value for the dollar when it comes to Electronic Information Services. To join, all you need is a 300 or 1200 baud modem. The hourly rate for non-prime time is $5/hr at 300 or 1200 baud. Non-prime time is Mon-Fri, 6pm-8am local time, all day Sat, Sun and most National Holidays. The one time signup fee is $29.95 which includes a $10 (2 hour) online time credit and a users manual.

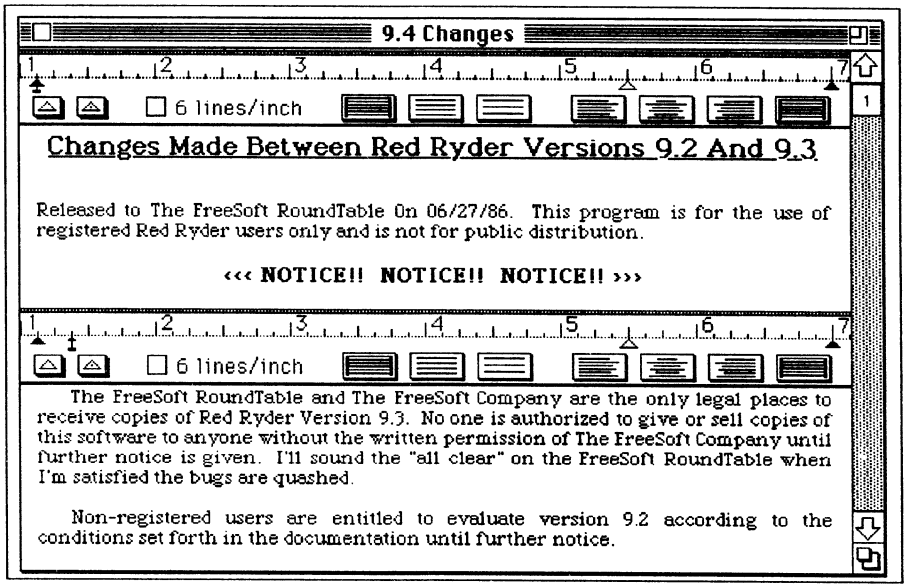
To sign up, have your major credit card or checking account number handy. Set your modem to local echo or half duplex at 300 or 1200 baud. Then dial 1-800-638-8369. When you get a connect, type HHH, Return. At the U#= prompt enter "XJM11875, GENIE" and hit Return. Then just answer the questions to obtain an account number. There is no monthly minimum charge....it's as easy as that.

If you have any questions about the Spectre 128 or want to start a new topic of your own, the Gadgets by Small RT is the best place.

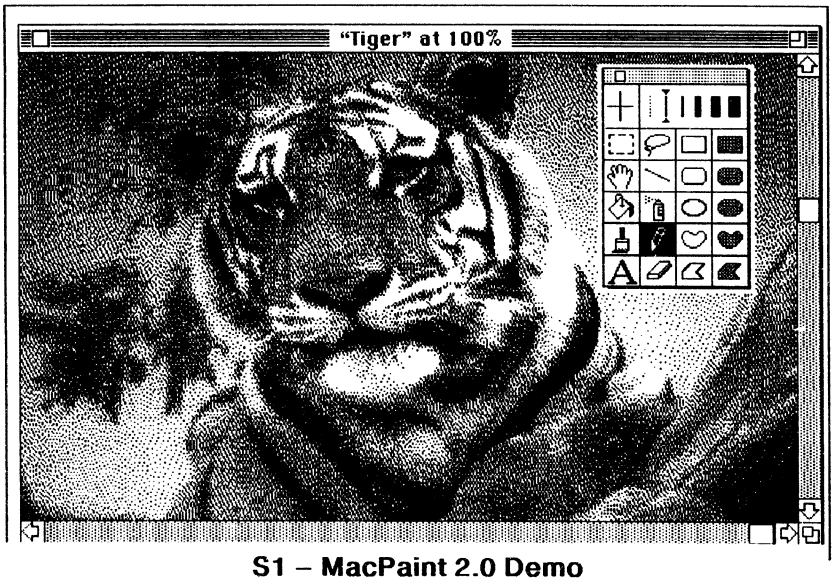
See you there!!!

New Spectre 128 Library

This month Current Notes is inaugurating a new library for the Spectre 128. The files in this library will work with the Spectre 128, using 128K ROMs, and a 1040ST or equivalent. If you are using a Spectre 128 with 64K ROMs in it, I refer you to the Current Notes Magic Sac library for compatible software. Some of the software in the Magic Sac library may not be compatible with the Spectre 128 using 128K ROMs; they are indicated as such. If you should find other



S1 - MacWrite 5.0 Demo



S1 – MacPaint 2.0 Demo

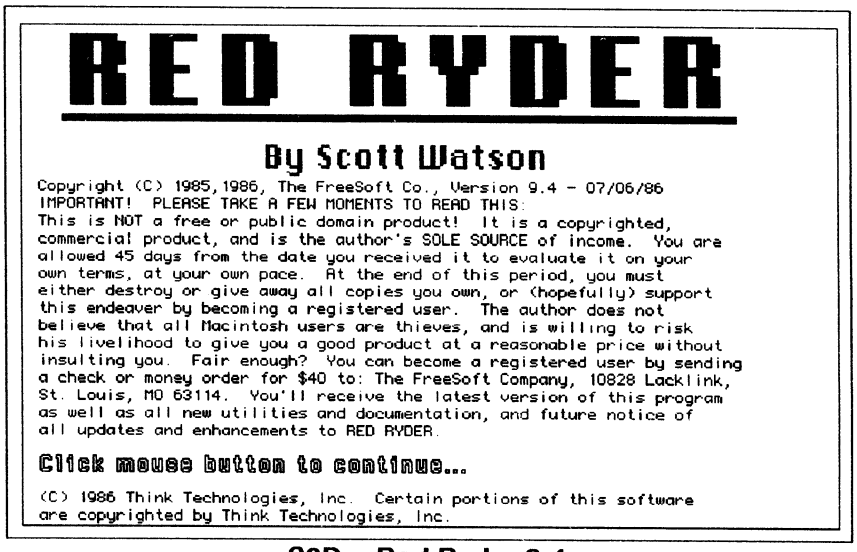
files in the Magic Sac library that are not Spectre 128 compatible, please let us know.

The first four disks to be added to the Spectre library are:

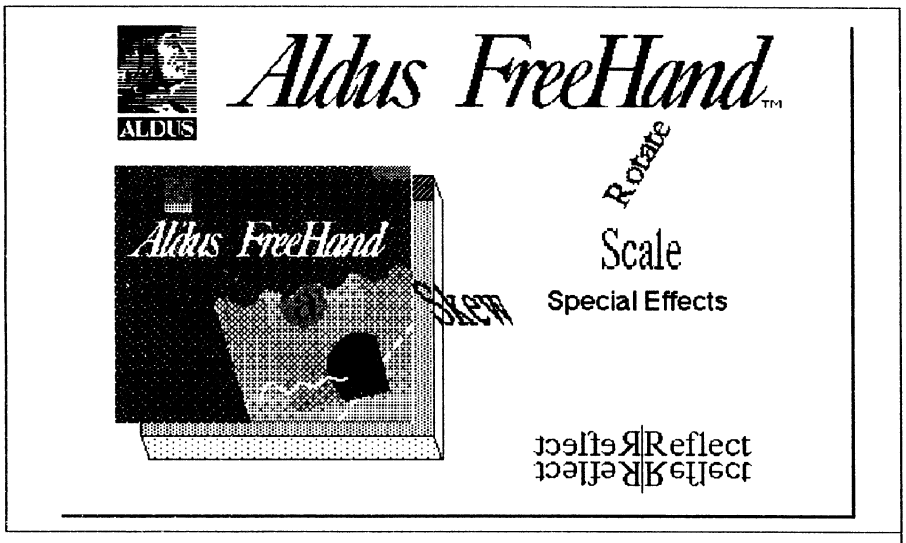
Disk S1 contains a fully working Demo version of **MacWrite 5.0** except that it cannot print or save documents. It can still be used for loading up documentation files and reading them if you don't have a more current version of the program. The older version of MacWrite 2.2 cannot read files created with version 4.5 and up.

Disk S2 contains a fully working Demo version of **MacPaint 2.0** except that it cannot print or save documents. It can still be used for loading up files and viewing them. Try out the tear off menus that are part of this latest version of the program. This version also has the hidden R-rated "Zebra Girl" dedication page in it that Apple removed when it was discovered. Just hold down the Tab-Shift-Space Bar keys down while using the About MacPaint drop down menu under the Apple. Also included on the disk are a few MacPaint files for your viewing pleasure.

Disk S3D contains a fully working version of **Red Ryder 9.4** on a double-sided disk. This is the last shareware version to be distributed before it became a commercial software product. If you like it don't forget to send in your shareware contribution. Better yet, go



S3D – Red Ryder 9.4



S4D – Aldus Freehand Demo

Disk S4D contains a demonstration of **Aldus Freehand** on a double-sided disk. It's actually a Videoworks II interactive demonstration of Freehand. The graphic effects demonstrated really make you want to go out and buy the real thing; it's a must have demo disk.

out and buy the latest version, which is version 10.3; I have seen it for as low as $55 in a MacWarehouse advertisement. Red Ryder is probably one of the most powerful telecommunications programs for the Mac. Full documentation, in MacWrite format, is included on the disk. Also included are a few utilities for batch downloading.

Current Notes Magic Sac PD Library

Desk Accessories

M8: DESK ACCESSORIES NO. 1. 45 desk accessories.

M18: DESK ACCESSORIES NO. 2. 30 more desk accessories.

M46: DESK ACCESSORIES NO. 3. 35 desk accessories.

Utility Disks

M2: TELECOM DISK NO. 1. BinHex, Free Term, FreeTerm.Doc, Kermit, PackIt III, StuffIt, TermWorks.

M3: UTILITIES NO. 1. DES, Font Doubler, MacDump, Mini Finder, PackIt III, Reverse Screen, RMover, Scan, Set File. SLICER. Ver Reader, Write Stream.

M5: DISK LIBRARIAN.

M9: UTILITIES NO. 2. Bind Icons, Change Appl. Font, Convert Desk Acc., Desk Accessory Mover, File Hacker, FontDoubler, Index, MakeScreen, MicroFinder, PurgeIcons, RamAStart, REdit, ResEd, SelectPaint, Show Version, User Interface Demo.

M11: PRINT UTILITIES. Coventry-12, Disk Labeler, Fast Eddie, Font Mover, Ink, MacWrite 4.5 to Text, miniWriter, MockWrite, Pica-10,ReadMacWrite, Walla Walla-9.

M27: UTILITIES NO. 3. Browse/Shazam!, Clocks: analog & digital, Edit, FEdit, launch, lazymenu, Magic Beep, Menu Editor, microFinder, Quick Dir, Quick Print, RamStart, Road Atlas, ShrinkToFit, SicnEdit, SortMenu, SortMenu Code, SuperFinder4.0, TabsOut, Unpit, WayStation.

M28: RED RYDER 7.0.

M43: UTILITIES NO. 4. DiskDup+, MacSnoop, RamDisk+, ResTools, Oasis (HFS), Font Librarian (HFS), Switch.

Games

M4: GAMES NO. 1. Backgammon, Bash Big Blue, Curves, MacLuff, MacYahtezee, Maze 3D, Meltdown, Missile Command, Munch, PepsiCas,Smile, Snow, Solitaire, Space Bubbles, Vax Runner II.

M6: GAMES NO. 2. Ashes, Black Box, Destroyer, HexPuzzle, Killer Kalah, MacPoly Demo, Office Attack, Point Symmetry, Snake, Solitaire, Trophy List, Wall Game, Wheel.

M7: GAMES NO. 3. Break the Bricks, Deep Ennui, Go, Mac Gunner, MacBugs, MacCommand, MacYahtzee, Wiz Fire.

M15: GAMES NO. 4. Alice, Amps 3(B2), Bricks, Canfield2, Iago, Lets Get Tanked!, MacHeads, Nim, Space Attack, Third Dim.

M20: GAMES NO. 5. Chase'Em, Crystal Raider, Daleks, Golf MacWay, Kill File, Kill, King, King.MacWrite, On-The-Contrary, StuntCopter.

M21: GAMES NO. 6. Guess, Hacker's Contest, Hot Air Balloon, Match, Ramm, Third Dim., Trick-Track, Utaan Attack, Zero Gravity.

M25: GAMES NO. 7. Billiards, Cross Master Demo, Flash Cards, Hangman, MacLuff, Master Guess, Safari, Venn.

M30: GAMES NO. 8. Bowl-A-Rama, MacTrek, Mystery Box, Shots, Star Trek Trivia Quiz, Window Blaster.

M34: GAMES NO. 9. 1000 Miles, Asteroids, Cairo ShootOut!, Donkey Doo, Duck Hunt, Pente 1.0.

M45: GAMES NO. 10. Blackjack, Gunshy, Humpback, New Social Climber, Panic, Puzzle, Star Trek Trivia Quiz, Video Poker.

M51: GAMES NO. 11. Bouncing Balls, Fire Zone, Mac Word Hunt, Out Flank, Risk and Word Search.

M53: GAMES NO. 12. 3D Checkers, Bills Casino, BMX-The Racing Game, HeloMath, Mouse Craps.

M58: GAMES NO. 13. Klondike, Space Station Pheta, Mac Concentration, Sitting Duck, Hot Air Balloon, Think Ahead.

M60: GAMES NO. 14. Golf Solitaire, Mac Football, Euchre, Gomoku, Pyramid, Checkers, Runaround and Macpuzzle.

M19: PINBALL CONSTRUCTION SET GAMES. PCS Player plus 12 Games.

M29: PCS GAMES NO. 2. PCS Player plus 10 Games.

Adventure Games

M17: DUNGEONS OF DOOM 4.0.

M23: VAMPIRE CASTLE.

M24: DEEP ANGST. 1 Mb ST only.

M31: BLACK WIZARD.

M36: CASTLE OF ERT.

M40: HACK, Ver1.03.

M41: RADICAL CASTLE.

M63D: MOUNTAIN OF MAYHEM.

M65D: DEEP ANGST II.

Graphics

M10: GRAPHICS NO. 1. Amy, Artisto, ball demo, Big Ben, Brooke, Bugs, Curves, Display Message, Dragon, Fighting 51, Fourth Dimension, GARF, HotSex!, Liar's Club, Living Art, Max Headroom, Moire 3.0, Nightmare, Optical Illusion, Paint Grabber, Painter's Helper #1, Pattern*, Pisces, Rotations, Saddle, The Fourth Docs, ViewPaint 1.5.

M12: MACBILLBOARD. (MacPaint clone), .

M22: GRAPHICS NO. 2. BlowUp, BlowUp Notes, CalendarMaker, Dynamo, Graphic, MadMenus, Math21, Rays, Simutree, Spiro, Tree, Vanlandingham.

M26: GRAPHICS NO. 3. 3D Sketch, AniRama, Bin/Graphics, Brownian Motion, Control, Fractal Contours, Fractals, Icon Collector, Julia, MakePaint, Melting Clock, Small View, ShapeArt, StarFlight, Window Demo.

M47: GRAPHICS NO. 4. Cursor Designer, Earthplot, Graphics, Mondrian, MotionMaker, Moving Finger, Wallpaper, Zoomation.

M57: GRAPHICS NO. 5. Micro Film Reader, Bomber, Iliana II, Preview, Super Ruler, and XVT-Draw.

Font Disks

M13: FONT DISK NO. 1. Akashi, AlgBlurb, Algebra, Athens, Boxie, Dover, Geneva, Hood River, ImageWriter, LED, London, Los Angeles, Luxor, Mars, Monaco, Park Ave, Pica, Ravenna, Rome, Runes, San Francisco, Seattle, Steel Brush, Ultra Bodoni.

M14: FONT DISK NO. 2. Bookman, Courier, Coventry, Dali, Genevaa, Hebrew, Manteco, Shadow Box, Sri Lanka, Times, Walla Walla, and font display w/docs.

M16: FONT DISK NO. 3. About Lachine, Alice, Avante Garde, Berkeley, Broadway, Camelot, Cartoon, Centura, Chancery, Eon, Exeter, Fallingwater, Fantaste Key, Fantaste!, Future, Ham, Helvitica, Hollywood, Lachine, Lineal, Madrid, Pittsubrg, San Quentin, Silicon Valley, Stencil, Unicol plus DAFont2.da and SysFonts.da.

M32: FONT DISK NO. 4. Canberra, Chicago, Humanistic, Music, New Dali, Palencia Application, Palo Alto, Pioneer Shadow plus F/DA sorter and Font Tester.

M35: FONT DISK NO. 5. Beehive, Beverly Hills, Boise, Chicago, Courier, DeStijl, Ham, Happy Canyon, Helvitica, Mod. Chicago, Old English, Square Serrif, Sri Lanka, Worksheet.

M42: FONT DISK NO. 6. Berlin, Boston II, Courier, Dorza, Highwood, MicroBoston, MiniBoston, New York, Palo Alto, Sparta, Stiletto, Symbol, Tatooine, Venice, Wartburg.

M44: FONT DISK NO. 7. 42nd Street, Aldous, Art Deco, Ascii, Blockbuster, Border, Clairvaux, Coptic, Deep Box, Ivy League, Klingon, Las Vagas, Little Box, Madrid, Memphis, Minneapolis, Rivendell, Spokane.

M50: FONT DISK NO. 8. Alderney; Cairo; Cyrillic; Greek; Paint; Playbill; Rehovot; Runes; Washington; Zodiac.

M61: FONT DISK NO. 9. New Century, Helvetica, Columbia, Minneapolis, Creamy, Palatino, Detroit, and Zap Chancery.

M64: FONT DISK NO. 10. York, Paint, Miscpix, Icon, Cupertino, Arabic, Fallingwater, Schematic, Moscow, and Isengard.

Clip Art

M33: CLIP ART NO. 1. 12 clip art screens plus ViewPaint 1.5.

M52: CLIP ART NO. 2. 27 clip art screens.

M55: CLIP ART NO. 3. 26 clip art screens.

Commercial Demos

M37: MAC-A-MUG PRO DEMO.

M38: VIDEO WORKS PLAYER NO. 1. PD player + 11 movies.

M39: DEMO DISK NO. 2. Anatomiser, DeskPaint, and SuperPaint.

M54: DESIGN. Includes 5 samples and full documentation.

M59D: DEMO DISK NO. 3. Kaleidagraph and Geographics II. Double-sided disk.

M62: DEMO DISK NO. 4. Math Blaster and Blob Manager Demo.

Hypercard Disks

M48D: HYPERSTACKS NO. 1.

M49D: HYPERSTAKCS NO. 2. NOTE: M48 and M49 require HyperDA and some form of DA tester--Sample It! (M46) or DA Tester 1.5 (M8 or M18).

M56D: HYPERSTACKS NO. 3. Atkinson's 786K Clip Art Stack, with 500 pieces of clip art. Disk requires HyperDA.

Spectre 128 PD Library

S1: **MacWrite 5.0** Demo

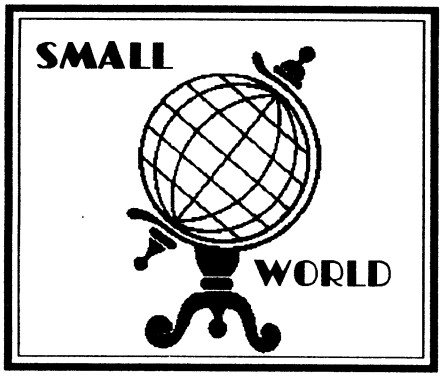
S2: **MacPaint 2.0** demo

S3D: **Red Ryder 9.4** (DS disk)

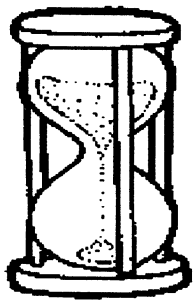
S4D: **Aldus Freehand** Demo (DS)

NOTE: These disks require Spectre 128 and **do not** work with the Magic Sac..

All disks are $4.00 each (any 10 for $35). Add $1 per every 6 disks for S&H. Order disks from CN Library, 122 N. Johnson Rd., Sterling, VA 22170.



And a Goodbye to 1988



By: Dave Small

Copyright 1988

It's been a year, all right.

Come with me briefly back to the start of this year. A week after New Year's, I went snow-sliding with my kids, and separated some ribs. (Separated ribs are something that usually only happen to NFL wide receivers; it means your ribs tried to break, but your rib cartilage, with rare sensibility, decided to rip instead.) Believe me, when your ribs hurt, moving anything in your body hurts. Took two months before I could lie down comfortably, and thank heavens for a waterbed for those two months.

A week after that I found out that my participation in Data Pacific was doomed, and I'd better start getting out of what I was so committed to. That took three long months.

I retired at age 29, for the record, in April of this year. (It's very important to me that I retired by 29). A week after my 30th birthday, Sandy and I had a present, named James, who is now eight months old.

James, incidentally, is the fifth James Small in the family. The first James came West in a covered wagon to settle in Washington. Gives you a little perspective, doesn't it?

In June, I had a GEnie conference on whether or not anyone cared about the 128K ROMs. I didn't think anyone really did. A day later, I set up the ST and Mac, and got to work. I finished in August; we shipped in September--nearly exactly two years after the first Magic Sacs shipped.

In August, I finally lost a friend I'd had since high school--Joel, my ex-partner. Except for Sandy, who is my best friend, he was closest to me. The relationship had slid since January, when I left Data Pacific; in August, it was over. I've pretty well worked through how that felt; alas, there's still a potshot or two headed my way from Data Pacific.

In September, my wife and I finally hit it in the computer world bigtime, well, at least to us. It had been many years since we worked together, and we were both a bit wary. Would we be able to handle it? Would we be able to work together and live together? And would anyone want the Spectre 128? Well, yes, it turned out they did, and after getting mobbed at Glendale and the Washington shows, then at Comdex, we're convinced.

We're not rich, mind you. We do have enough money to get new tires for the poor old Jeep for this winter; bald tires and Denver snow are a bad mix. And we do have enough money to pay for James, which it turns out, our insurance deftly managed to sidestep covering. (Ah, well). In my life, it seems like I get enough money for what I really need, and that's enough.

Our friend Dan Moore helped us out with the programming on Spectre 128, and we paid him for it from what we made at Glendale. Dan put in extreme overtime to get us to that show; he deserves every penny. Dan is also ex-Data Pacific now, at home at AT&T, a certified UNIX guru at play with many, many machines. (After a $150 check from dP was stopped, Dan and Joel don't speak any more).

Our friend Barb (ex-dP) has also helped us with many hours of work, and has answered the telephone for us so we could get some work done. She's done a good job, too.

In November, I got a call from the FCC, who had just shut down Data Pacific's Translator One manufacturing, because the FCC ID put on the Translators was faked. (You now know the reason I was so sure I had to leave dP back in January; when I found out, I started leaving). The FCC wanted to make sure I wasn't manufacturing Translators as well; Joel tried to sic them on me when he was shut down. It wasn't hard to prove I don't make Translators, so nothing more happened. But I was glad to be well out of dP when the Federal people showed up.

At November Comdex this year, the big attractions didn't show up --no 68030 box, no finished laptop. The 68030 showed up in a German magazine as a block diagram leaked from Atari Germany; the laptop showed up, and had to be carried by two people. (Think about that last sentence).

But at Comdex I learned something else. *Current Notes* gets around.

I spoke with people from across the country that had read the things I've written, from one person very interested in Nikola Tesla to two women wondering why I'd never really printed their letters to me about Why Women Don't Like Computers. I spoke with many Germans who had read the magazine and wanted the Spectre 128. I spoke with people from Peru, from Argentina, from Eastern Europe (Hungary) who read *Current Notes*.

All of which makes it a little harder for me to write, you realize. Sometimes I get playful with this column; but what I write goes a long way indeed. I need to be careful while playing.

The same thing has happened to me on Compuserve; one depressing Monday morning, after Neil Harris had left Atari, I more or less let myself cut loose at Atari. Turns out copies of that note were sent immediately all over Atari, especially to the Tramiels. Finally, when the fuss was getting out of hand--people were saying I was dropping the Spectre 128, and thus they weren't going to order!--I stepped back and eased things up. It was a real lesson to me that despite all the pranks and playfulness I put into the Compuserve notes, what I write gets listened to.

Ideas have consequences; I have to be a little more careful with my ideas.

Thus, I could write this column and shred Atari for what happened at Comdex. In fact, I did that, and it's another disk file on this computer; I read it over, and decided that was the wrong thing to do. Besides, I had written it just after a visit from the in-laws, and that's been known to skew my temper a bit. (Honest.)

Or, I could write a column about HyperWeb, the product that's increasingly coming to my attention as Something I Need To Create. But again, that's not the thing to do.

I finally decided that after 1988, with all of its downs and ups, a quick summary of the year was in order. I have real mixed feelings about 1988; it had great highs and low lows. The Chinese have a curse that says, "May you live in interesting times"; I surely have.

At the end of the year, my wife and I are succeeding in our business. We've made enough money to pay the bills, my ribs don't hurt, and we have a new kid which, honestly, is the nicest baby I've ever met. (Lest you think this is proud-fatheritis, I refer you to the people who met James at the Glendale show).

Thus, I've ended up the year definitely ahead. Goodbye, 1988; you were interesting times, but I'm ready for a little boredom now.

For 1989, I'd ask for a dull year. Nothing interesting, please; just one of Those years that slide by with few memories. I'd hate to think this whole thing is accelerating!

Christmas Presents

As we approach the holiday season, it's traditional to write a column suggesting good gifts for Christmas. So that I leave you with more than a quick retrospective of my 1988, let me suggest a few things.

(1) *Dungeon Master* is the finest Dungeon-style game ever done. If you have a color monitor, and have the faintest interest in games, get it. My kids and wife and I have had a *ball* with this game; it took us three months to finish it. (We perched an ST on the end of our bed and would spend bedtime with the kids working our way down the Dungeon. At this point, Wu-Tse, Sonja, Alex and Iadido, the four travellers, are more like friends than machine entities.)

(2) The book **Please Understand Me** is well worth reading. Since I wrote about it, and the NT personality, I have had many, many programmers and other computer-folk run themselves through the profile in there, from some big ST names to some people at Atari. The result?

To this day, EVERY programmer profiled has been an NT, from the 10% of the populace that are NT's. And every writer has been an NF.

I have read for most of my life, and my wife and I have a pretty big book collection. This is the best book I've ever read. It helped my marriage a great deal; it's changed the way I view the world. Check it out, and the world won't be quite as much a mystery.

(3) Go around this Christmas and look at Other Brands of computers. Check out the Amiga; I've got one, and it has fun points to it. (My kids think the speech synthesizer is hysterical, for instance; they type letters into it and listen to it babble. Sounds sort of like a computerized James.) The 25 mhz 80386 boxes are blindingly fast; they answer your questions before you ask, so to speak. Go see what's out in the world, not just Atari stuff.

Then, spend a minimal amount of money, and if you've got kids, get them a computer, or at least a family machine. Your kids are going to grow up in a world where computers will be commonplace. Get them used to machines now; let them think of machines as fun. Already many colleges require a computer.

This is why my 8-year-old Atari 800's, and Corvus hard disk, are in Eric and Jenny's room, and why the sounds of *Preppie* and *Qix* echo through the Small household once again, along with the Babbling Amiga. I want the kids to have memories of computers as fun and unscary things.

What computer would I recommend? I don't know; it varies with the situation, and your needs. Generally, the industry is headed

towards Macintosh–like computers, OS/2 with Presentation Manager is a big, clunky multitasking Mac in many ways, as is the Mac with Multifinder, so I'd be inclined to head that way, by either the Mac or PC path. (Of course, the ST is there now, and can go both of those paths too.)

(4) If you've got a computer you use, treat yourself to a hard disk. They are cheap and fast; you get far more out of each sit–down at the computer with a hard disk than with floppies.

(5) Next year, laser printers are going to be far lower in price. Expect dot matrix to be obsolete. Hold off on printers this year, *grin*.

(6) If you play rock and roll guitar, a Scholz Rockman (tm) is great.

(7) There's a Bernoulli Box for the ST now (a removable10/20/40 meg hard disk) that's fast, and, well, removable. ICD now has a SCSI tape backup, too. Tempting.

Conclusion

When I was in college, about 1977, a man named Tom Scholz and his friends put a rock album together, called Boston. It was good; in fact, it was the best–selling debut album in history.

Well, Tom ran into trouble at his old record company when the next album was due. He wanted to take his time and do the record right. His record company wanted it right now. They cut off his royalties and figured that, since he didn't have any income, he couldn't do anything about it.

Tom went and built up a new company, called Scholz R&D, and came out with a fine product called the Rockman. It's a plug–in unit that gives a guitar the sound Boston has. Then, with the money from SR&D, he hired an attorney and nailed his old record company to the wall. At last count––some parts are still dragging on––he's won.

In many ways, as you see, his story parallels my own; that's why the Spectre 128 carries a secret dedication page to Tom Scholz and the Boston band. And that's also why I got a Rockman last year; I wanted to show, in some way, my loyalty to him.

On his third album, from a new record company too wise to screw with him, he wrote a song called Changes, about all he'd been through, the shafting by his record company, the buildup of SR&D, the lawsuit, all the changes that had happened to his life (not ones that he necessarily would have liked at the time).

But in the end, he decides to his surprise, "I like it––for those changes have opened my eyes."

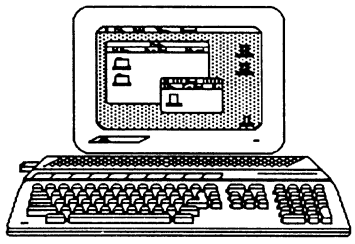
Goodbye to 1988; I liked it; those changes have opened my eyes.

See you all next year; have a happy and safe holiday.

Introducing

Get more out of your Atari ST!

Spectre 128



Atari ST not included

The Most Powerful Macintosh™ Emulator Available for the Atari ST™

Written by David Small, the creator of the Magic Sac™

COMPATIBILITY :

• 128K ROM compatible! With the 128K ROMs installed, Spectre can run new Mac software such as HyperCard™, Adobe Illustrator™, and PageMaker™, plus all of the older Mac software.

• Spectre will be compatible with all future Mac software

• Directly compatible with Mac's HFS. Spectre will boot compatible format 800K disks.

SPEED :

• Floppy disk write speed is up to 8 times faster ; hard disks can copy a 500K file in 8 seconds

• Screen redraw speed is 400% faster than the Magic Sac

• The screen is 30% larger, and the overall speed of the Spectre is 20% faster than the Mac Plus

Suggested Retail Price:

$ 179.95

Gadgets by Small, Inc.

40 W. Littleton Blvd., #210-211
Littleton, Colorado 80120
(303) 791-6098

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ST Software Specials of the Month:

Five Star Pak:

- **Death Sword**
- **Crazy Cars**
- **Enduro Racer**
- **Wiz Ball**
- **Rampage**

$39.96

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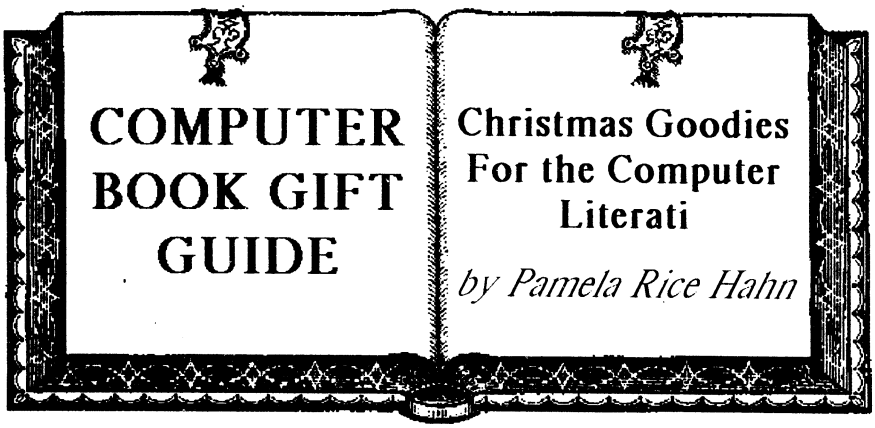

Holiday Greeting

Well, it's that time of year again. Whether you're spending money you found stuffed inside your stocking or looking for a gift for that hard-to-buy-for computer enthusiast on your list (He buys EVERY new piece of software on the market as soon as it's released!), the books listed below are all worthy of the price you'll pay to obtain them.

Here's wishing you a joyous holiday, love of family and friends, good health, happiness, and at least one day in the new year spent snowbound at home in front of a toasty-warm fire reading your favorite book. God Bless!

For The Programmer

COMPUTE!'s TECHNICAL REFERENCE GUIDE(s) FOR THE ATARI ST

Sheldon Leemon, $19.95 each. Vol. 1, 343 pages, Vol. 2, 330 pages.

Both books are intended for the intermediate to advanced Atari ST programmer. Programming examples are given in C, machine language, and BASIC.

Volume one is a tutorial as well as a reference guide covering VDI (the Virtual Device Interface) and the ST's graphics routines. GEM and VDI are explained (in plain English) in the first section. Subsequent chapters deal with utilizing VDI functions to draw points and lines, fill areas, and move shapes around the screen. Explanations include how text/font files are organized. The final half of the book is a reference guide to VDI functions, complete with two indices.

Volume two covers the GEM AES (Application Environment Services), explaining multitasking, window operation, dialog boxes, alert boxes, menus, input, and output. The latter half of the book is an AES functions reference listed by opcode accompanied by an alphabetical index as well. The book provides the reader with a better understanding of GEM graphic objects, resource files, and desk accessories.

CRASH COURSE IN ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND EXPERT SYSTEMS

Louis E. Frenzel, Jr. SAMS, $19.95, 358 pages.

Written for engineers, programmers, and technical managers, this book capsulizes Artificial Intelligence (AI) concepts and techniques. Topics include search methods, robotics applications, building an expert system, and an explanation of how AI can enable computers to "see" and analyze visual information. LISP and Prolog are each granted a separate chapter. Index.

Speaking of Artificial Intelligence, CN Library Disk #224, TOY PROLOG, contains the language which operates exactly like the system described in PROGRAMMING IN PROLOG by Clockrin & Melish. Unfortunately, the complete docs included in this PD version from Germany are written (completely) in GERMAN!

AN INTRODUCTION TO PROLOG

Ramachandran Bharath, Ph.D., TAB, $16.95, 213 pages.

According to Dr. Bharath, "conventional programming is based on the concept of giving specific commands to the computer about how to solve a particular problem. Prolog is an example of attempts to make the process of human-computer communication significantly different in style. Prolog tries to achieve the goal of requiring the user to describe the problem in a logically coherent and correct manner, leaving it to the computer to work out and execute the necessary steps for solving the problem. Though Prolog does not fully realize this aim, it is a significant step towards this new style of declarative or descriptive programming."

Interested? Then AN INTRODUCTION TO PROLOG is an inexpensive primer on this language. Intended to be used as a self-study course, Bharath says the language is ideal for those with little or no experience with computers. (I'm taking his word here, because while I've read enough to vouch for the book's readability, I HAVE NOT tried implementing any of the examples nor have I worked

with Prolog. That project is quite a ways down on my ever-expanding TO DO list.)

Chapters cover: First steps--facts, questions, and variables; Rules in Prolog; Structures in Prolog; Input/output and tracing; and a wide variety of example programs.

For The Curious

PROGRAMMERS AT WORK
Susan Lammers, Microsoft Press, $14.95, 385 pages.

Those of you who remember HACKERS will also recall how that book read like an epic novel. While equally fascinating, this book reads rather like a collection of short stories.

Susan Lammers has interviewed some of today's most notable programmers. Each interview is prefaced by a short biography of the subject. An appendix provides sample code, doodles, and other examples of the output stemming from these individuals' endeavors.

It is interesting to learn how each person's approach varies. Some are influenced by personality traits. Others by forces and events, i.e. necessity. Min S. Yee, the publisher of Microsoft Press, noticed parallels between the work of the writer and that of programmers. It was his curiosity as to the individual experiences, approaches, and philosophies of software design (and designers) that led to this book.

This book is intended to be a first in a series. A brief introduction details how the interviews were conducted. ("We asked questions: Where did the idea come from? How difficult was it to bring the idea into reality? ...Is it an art or a science? A craft or a skill?") While intended to serve as a learning tool for aspiring programmers, the collection satisfied the curiosity of this reader; it also provided me with an interesting, readable escape.

Interviews, in order of their appearance in the book, are of:
Charles Simonyi--Application Software Group that produced Microsoft Word;
Butler Lampson--a senior engineer at the Systems Research Center of Digital Equipment Corporation;
John Warnock--co-founder of PostScript's Adobe Systems;
Gary Kildall-developer of CP/M, Chairman of Digital Research, and President of KnowledgeSet (formerly, Activenture) Corporation;
Bill Gates--developer of MS-DOS, CEO of Microsoft;
John Page--working in his garage, he developed Software Publishing Corporation's first effort, PFS:FILE;
C. Wayne Ratliff--dBASE II & III;
Dan Bricklin, Bob Frankston (separate interviews)--VisiCalc;
Jonathan Sachs--Lotus 1-2-3;
Ray Ozzie--project manager of Lotus Symphony;
Peter Roizen--T/Maker;
Bob Carr--Chief Scientist at Ashton-Tate;
Jeff Raskin--Apple Computer's Macintosh project creator and past conductor of the San Francisco Chamber Opera Company;
Andy Hertzfeld--Mac Switcher;
Toru Iwatani--Pac Man;
Scott Kim--Inversions, the book and the Mac program;
Jaron Lanier--ex-Atari video game developer and programmer;
Michael Hawley--a digital audio programmer for The Droid Works, an affiliate of Lucasfilm Ltd.

SOFTWARE PEOPLE
Douglas G. Carlston, Prentice Hall Press, $9.95, 280 pages

This is Carlston's personal chronicle of what has been referred to as the "20th Century Gold Rush." The co-founder of Broderbund Software, he describes his views and observations of the successes and failures in his business and those around him as a new industry was born. The home computer market boom, then bust, provides some interesting stories on his beliefs why "like the book and record businesses, software publishing must, in order to work well, achieve the proper balance of art [programming creative freedom] and business interests. Written before the Tramiels' rescue (and perhaps, as it would appear, eventual sacrifice) of Atari, Carlston's account of the company at the base of our love-hate relationship deals mainly with Atari's original game machines, the Warner approach, and programmer migration. Covering the homebrew beginnings of his and other careers to the evolution that occurred once the packagers, promoters, and venture capitalists arrived, SOFTWARE PEOPLE makes for pleasant, light, and interesting reading.

On-Line Information

ALFRED GLOSSBRENNER'S MASTER GUIDE TO COMPUSERVE
Alfred Glossbrenner, BRADY, $19.95, 350 pages

DELPHI: THE OFFICIAL GUIDE
Michael A. Banks, BRADY, $19.95, 400 pages

CompuServe and DELPHI both have their advantages. Whether you wish to determine which service is best equipped to satisfy your on-line needs or you need to better understand how to maneuver your way around these services, you'll ultimately save money by reading these guides off-line. Glossbrenner offers all kinds of money saving advanced tips and best bets. Banks provides a trifolded quick reference command guide at the end of his book and a

tutorial-style guided tour inside. The Banks book was written with the cooperation of the General Videotex Corporation. Glossbrenner is already well known for his best selling THE COMPLETE HANDBOOK OF PERSONAL COMPUTER COMMUNICATIONS, (Everything You Need to go Online With the World) and HOW TO GET FREE SOFTWARE.

The DELPHI book is more of an overview of the entire service. Atari is listed in the index, and a page and a half is devoted to describing the Atari SIG. The CompuServe book concentrates more on the business, investing, and professions options the service provides, mentioning Atari only in a scant one sentence paragraph about ANTIC magazine. It does provide an excellent preliminary introduction to such topics as the 12 steps to downloading a FREE program, unravelling the mysteries of "ARC'd" files, and sign-on, set-up explanations.

For The Desktop Publisher

DESKTOP PUBLISHING TYPE & GRAPHICS (A Comprehensive Handbook)
Deke McClelland & Craig Danuloff, HBJ, $29.95, 312 pages.

When facing a lack of space, quote the authors: "An effective document does two things--it attracts attention and it conveys information. The success or failure of any document is therefore equally as dependant upon presentation as it is upon content.

"...no attempt has been made to teach graphic design, page layout, or composition. ...Our goal is to help you work faster by eliminating needless trial and error, and to help you work better by previewing the implications of your type and graphic choices."

Examples abound in this book. An impressive array of typeface samples offer the user, who is either shopping for additional fonts or who wants to utilize *FONTZ!* to convert Mac fonts, the chance to view the styles. This before they either make that final purchase or invest all kinds of time only to find that Bookman was really more appropriate to your needs than Courier. (We ST users have the added advantage of knowing we can utilize *FONTZ!* to prepare whatever printer fonts we need. *GDOS* or *GPLUS+* is our icing on the cake, so to speak.) Curious how your choice of point sizes, type face, and type styles will look when combined? Chances are you'll find an example of what you had in mind. The book really can save hours of trial-and-error when faced with making your font selections and layout choices.

It is difficult to do justice to this book in just a few paragraphs. For example, the chapter on LINES & SHAPES devotes a page each to line weights & combos, line styles, line endings, rectangles, circles, and 2 pages of rounded corners. The final page of the chapter shows an example of the effect when a variety of the previous examples are used in conjunction with one another. As if all the sample documents weren't instructive enough, since no document is ever perfect the first time out, the book even includes an appendix of proofreader's marks.

"This volume was entirely created using Apple's Macintosh computer and Adobe's PostScript language. The majority of the volume was imageset at 1270 dots per inch on our Linotronic L100." The authors also include 72 dpi ImageWriter dot-matrix, 300 dpi Apple LaserWriter, and 2540 dpi Linotroni 300 imagesetter examples.

Do yourself a favor and add this volume to your dtp library.

LOOKING GOOD IN PRINT: A Guide to Basic Design For Desktop Publishing
Author: Roger C. Parker, Ventana Press, $23.95, 221 pages.

This book is an excellent tutorial on proven design techniques. All the fancy fonts, printers, and programs at our disposal don't mean a thing if we don't master the basics of effective, attractive document preparation. This book will help you do just that.

Just as important, this book is not machine-specific. The authors assume you already know the basics of your own particular dtp program. Their intent is to provide a generic design guide. "After all, the elements of good design are constant, regardless of your hardware and software!"

Section one introduces you to the basic building blocks of design, complete with examples and instructions on how to choose the correct typeface, illustrate your document, and utilize attention-grabbing boxes and drop-shadows. A discussion of the "10 Common Design Pitfalls and How to Avoid Them" helps the reader learn how to prepare a document that does not look like the work of an amateur.

Section two gives "design makeover" examples, showing how a few changes can make a good document even better.

Section three offers hints, tips, suggestions, and tricks for improving newsletter, brochure, ad, business card, letterhead, and catalog (to name a few) layouts.

Parker provides suggestions on developing your own document style and ends with suggestions on how copyfitting, rather than copywriting, may actually help in the preparation of better publications. Another dtp must-have!

Have a Merry Christmas!

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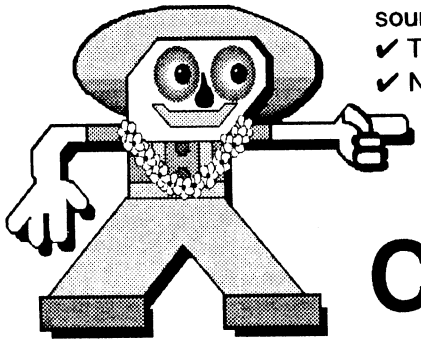

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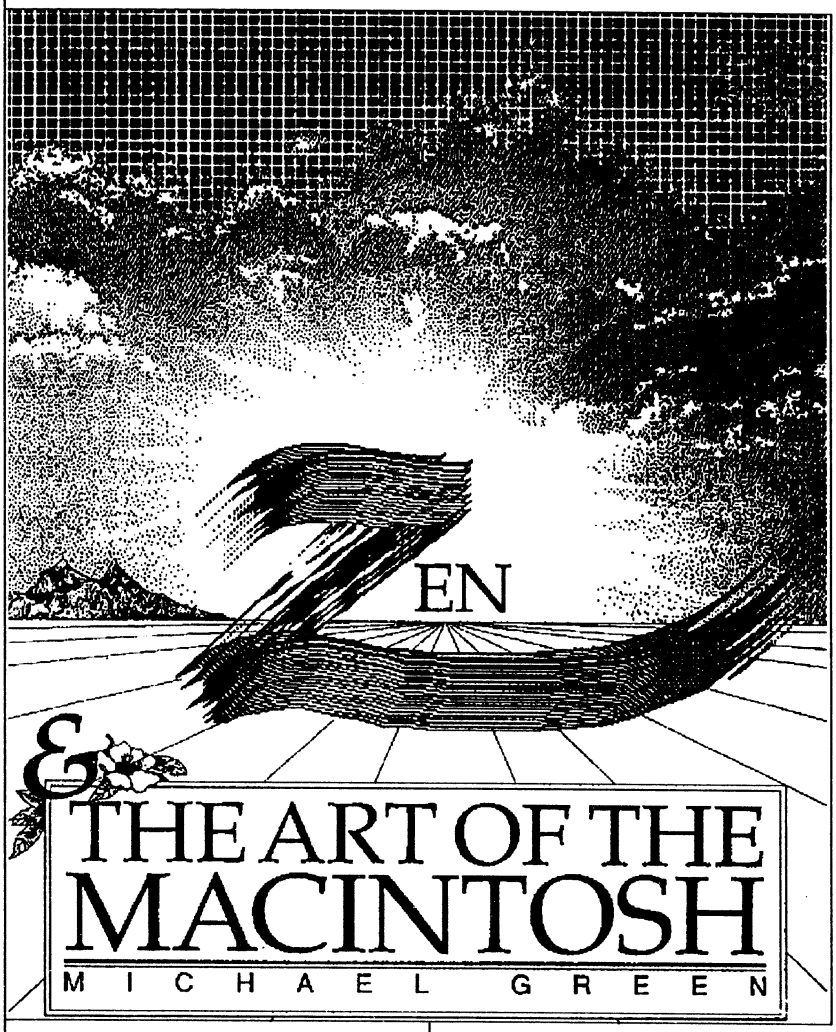

A Book No ST Owner Should Be Without

Review by Larry Jones

Intriguing Titles

No, I don't own a Macintosh. I don't even own a MagicSac Mac emulator. I just happen to think this is a very worthwhile book that will appeal to a lot of ST users and those of us who wonder why it is we like playing around on a computer so much. In reading this review, you should keep a couple of points in mind:

Point #1: I'll admit it: I can't resist an intriguing book title. A couple of years ago, when I started getting interested in computers, the first book about computers I bought was **The Secret Guide to Computers**. I couldn't resist. Then, a couple of days later as I was walking by a computer section in a local bookstore I saw a copy of what turned out to be a very entertaining book called **The Computer Wimp**. What could I do? I bought it. I can't imagine paying money for a book called **dBASE III: A Power Users Guide**. But if they ever come out with a book called **The Pittsburgh Pirates' Guide to Stealing dBASE**, well...what can I say? I'll just have to buy it. I guess I'm just not a real serious kind of computer guy.

Point #2: I love books that have lots of graphics. To me, the adage that says a picture is worth a thousand words is an understatement. The right image stays with me much longer than reading The Great American Novel. If your concept of value includes 'most words per dollar spent,' this book may leave you feeling 'short-changed.' Different People--Different Ways. With this in mind, I'd like to tell you about this fantastic book about computers I happened to discover a few weeks ago.

You guessed it: It has a very intriguing title: **Zen and the Art of the Macintosh**. Although I don't own a Mac, I just couldn't resist. Anyway, it isn't really about the Macintosh. It's really about how this artist type person fell in love with what he could do with a computer. That's right, I said artist. That means this book is FULL of (if you haven't already guessed) beautiful graphics which were all done on a computer. They happened to be done on a Mac, but they could just as easily have been done on the ST.

A Magical Book

The book is 238 pages filled with images, quotes, thoughts, ideas, and bits of Zen wisdom. You can turn to any chapter and to any page and get something from it. The way I react to it is a kind of fascination, or inspiration, or one of those -ation words. The book is, according to its author Michael Green, "written, edited, designed, illustrated, typeset, laid out, and pasted-up entirely on a Macintosh computer." I wouldn't have believed a computer could create something as magical as this. The book is loosely separated into seven different chapters. They are:

"The Discovery of the Digital Zone"
"Saving the World With Silicone"
"The Seductive Fascination of the Computer"
"Zen Art Mac Art"
"The Relentless Fascination of the Computer"
"Chopping Wood, Carrying Water"
"Nuts & Bolts & Bits"

When Mr. Green was putting this book together, it is obvious he was

having a lot of fun. While writing this review, 'fun' is the word that keeps coming to mind. There is just a lot of playfulness in the way this is put together. An example is found on page 155 on "Solving the Documentation Mysteries." I quote: "Now it can be told: Odds are excellent that the manual of instruction accompanying any new equipment or software will be the creation of a secret computer priesthood. Following the time-honored traditions of their craft, the real objective of these Silicon Illuminati is not, of course, to actually inform us about the installation and use of the product in question, but to make us feel childlike and stupid--and by extension, in awe of their rarefied and arcane knowledge.

How is this done? No one knows for sure. Perhaps the handbooks are conceived in a parallel dimension where the language only looks like English. Or are unknown meanings assigned to words on a random basis? Whatever the method, the results are brilliant. No further than the fourth page, the line of reasoning will have imperceptibly slipped from my grasp, eventually defying even multiple readings."

Sound familiar? Now put this on a page with some strange kind of scientific hieroglyphics in the background, and put a picture of the neanderthal man puzzling over a computer manual and you have some idea of what this book is like.

I'm not going to try to explain anything about Zen and how it relates to the use of computers. I'll leave that for you to discover for yourself.

A Medievalist At Heart

As much as anything, this book is about using computers to share with each other. In a world filled with lawsuits about copyright infringements, I think Mr. Green's approach is an admirable one. I hope many of you 'computer creators' feel the same way. This is what he says "On the Philosophy of Digitizing":

"Basically, I'm a Medievalist at heart, harkening to a time when artists and writers freely exchanged ideas and images. If somebody else did a really neat Adam and Eve, why bother to invent another pose if you liked that one? At that time we hadn't yet gotten so spun out on "originality." The point was to get the message out. Use whatever material is appropriate. Artists & writers viewed themselves less as originators than as transmitters of material and, as such, were less attached to their work. (Curiously this is almost exactly the ethic of the early hackers who started this whole thing: a fervent belief in the free exchange of all their discoveries.)

"Anyway, I think the pixelated image that Mac digitizing captures is only a shadow of the original --the idea of the thing, rather than the thing itself; Digitizing captures an **idea**. And when you finish playing around with it, what you have (if it's still recognizable) is an **homage** rather than a rip-off. In keeping with this, let me go on record as saying **anyone who wishes to digitize any of the images in this book is welcome to do so**. May a hundred flowers bloom!"

With that philosophy in mind, I recommend this book to you. It has found a place on my bookshelf right next to **The Tao of Pooh** and **Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance**.

Running Press Book Publishers, 125 South 22nd Street, Philadelphia, PA 19103, $16.95 ($1.00 postage).

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Watch Out: More Good Stuff Coming Our Way!

by J. Andrzej Wrotniak

This month I would like to write about a special class of programs: those which do nothing really by themselves, but help the others to perform better (or to perform at all). They are usually referred to as utilities, but this term is wider: a calculator or editor is also often described as a utility. No, the programs I mean are ones which allow you to get more from others (or, at least, to perform the same tasks with less irritation). Some of them replace parts of, generally speaking, the Atari operating system, making our machines faster, smarter or friendlier.

This is not going to be a systematic review of the subject. We are going to have a look at some of the recent releases. Don't you need a Christmas present for that special Atari enthusiast?

G+PLUS

Throw Your GDOS Away and Let's Boogie!

Seems like GDOS fonts for the Atari ST are becoming a standard, after a long warm-up period. Remember: in those early years only Migraph was using them in their *EasyDraw*. Then *Degas Elite* incorporated GDOS fonts for on-screen text, and then *Timeworks Desktop Publisher ST* arrived, and things never will be the same.

Many of us are using three or more GDOS programs. The necessity of re-booting the computer every time we want to use another program with a different set of fonts (to say nothing about copying the new ASSIGN.SYS file into the default directory) brings pink foam drooling down the chins of even the meekest and best-tempered of us, including yours humbly. One might think that Atari never expected anybody to use GDOS and thus notice the lousy (mildly speaking) design.

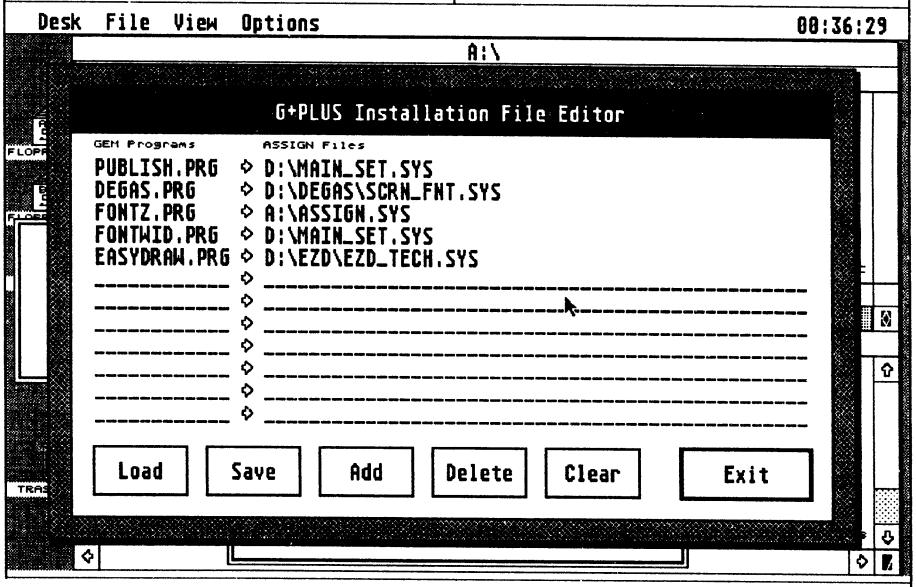
Good news: our friends from CodeHead Software, Charles F. Johnson and John Eidsvoog, have come to the rescue. Enter *G+Plus (pronounced G-Plus*, some of us poor immigrants will never learn the proper softwarese), a total and much improved replacement for GDOS, with some important extra features. Read on.

I bought the program two months ago, and--after setting it up--do not notice it any more. *Unobtrusive* is the word, and that is the most important thing required from such utilities.

The first thing to do after opening the package and backing up the disk is to find various copies of GDOS residing in your AUTO folders and throw them away (some people recommend using a shredder, but this may be excessive). Then we put G+PLUS.PRG into all AUTO folders we may have, and the G+PLUS.ACC accessory--to the directory (or directories) where we keep our other accessories. Yes, in order to fully utilize the advantage of *G+PLUS*, we should boot up with the accessory.

G+PLUS.PRG does just what GDOS.PRG does. Briefly, we need it running quietly in the background every time we use programs with the so-called GDOS output, so that the programs know how to output text and graphics to various devices.

On the other hand, G+PLUS.ACC allows for replacing the current ASSIGN.SYS file with any other file in the proper format.



It will even remember the *.SYS file assigned to every program, so that this file will be automatically read when the program is invoked. Or, if we double-click on a program icon with the ALT key pressed, G+PLUS.ACC will politely ask us, which of the *.SYS files we may need.

In addition to this, and as opposed to *GDOS*, *G+PLUS* does not cause any slowing down of screen operations (frankly speaking, I have never noticed this slowdown before, but yes, it is true).

The user interface of G+PLUS.ACC is reasonable and easy to use, and the program performs as advertised. After a few weeks you stop noticing it at all, and that is as things should be.

The documentation is brief and adequate (with one exception: the division of responsibilities between program and accessory is not clearly stated), containing also some information of general nature and some for programmers who want to reload fonts dynamically without losing compatibility with *GDOS* (this is important for writing commercial software).

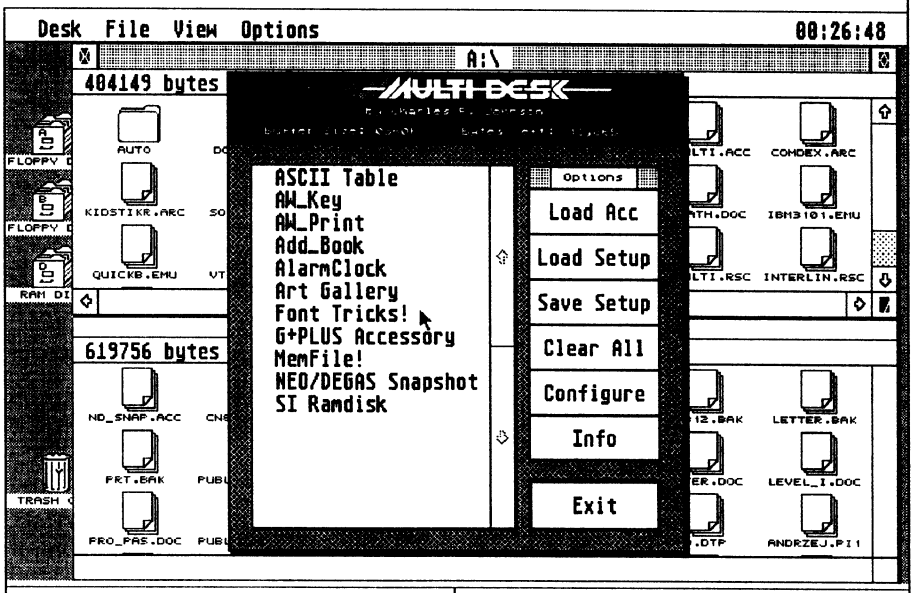
The program, from CodeHead Software, sells for $36.95 or from your local dealer for slightly less. This is well-spent money, especially (but not only) for users of *Timeworks Publisher ST*.

I recommend *G+PLUS* very highly. Go and buy it now.

MultiDesk

And the Restless Mr.Johnson

Mr. Johnson from CodeHead Software seems to be restless recently and let us hope he will stay this way for some time. Here is his second program: *MultiDesk*. It allows you to choose a new set of desktop accessories without rebooting, and the number of accessories residing in memory is limited only by the memory size.



Copy MULTDESK.ACC into your directory with other accessories and you are set. All remaining five accessory slots may be, of course, used for other accessories. Now, clicking on "MultiDesk" in the Desk menu will bring the *MultiDesk* dialog. From here you can decide which accessories *MultiDesk* will load into itself, which accessories will be removed, or what accessory to run by clicking on its name on a list in the dialog box. The maximum number of accessories available at one time is 32, but even this limit can be easily worked around (see below).

MultiDesk reserves a memory buffer for the loaded accessories. If the buffer size is not large enough, it can be changed (but not from inside a running program, and there are good reasons for this), and a new, larger, set of accessories can be loaded. If the buffer size is too large (i.e. more than enough for the current set of accessories), there is a "shrink to fit" option.

Again, there are nice touches all over the program. For example, to save you mousing around, an option can be enabled to bring the mouse to the accessory list in the dialog box (so that you do not need to move it all the way from the Desk menu).

Yes, of course, a configuration file can be created and saved on the disk without leaving *MultiDesk*, so at the next bootup all selected accessories will be loaded automatically. Yes, you can have two or more configuration files and load the whole configuration on request, without selecting individual accessories. No, *MultiDesk* will not do dishes.

MULTDESK.ACC can be renamed and thus placed in more than one accessory slot. This way one can have up to 192 accessories present at one time (six times 32), as long as you have enough megabytes (or terabytes) of memory. This is all you, I and other normal people may need, but there is more. *MultiDesk* can be nested into itself (i.e. there can be incarnations of *MultiDesk* inside a *Multidesk*). Given the memory limitations, this does not seem to have any practical applications, but it clearly demonstrates that *MultiDesk* is a well-behaved program.

Mr. Johnson was able to nest *MultiDesk* down to 130 levels into itself on a 4-MByte machine; I checked the claim to the third level and gave up, feeling ridiculous.

One more feature, an essential one this time. Renaming the program to MULTDESK.PRG and double-clicking on it from the desktop allows you to execute all desktop accessories without installing them (or any accessories at all) at the boot-up. Of course, upon returning from MULTDESK.PRG to the desktop, the accessories will again become unaccessible, but what a relief!

There are quite a few useful programs written, God knows why, as desktop accessories. Do I need a sector editor (or a memory tester, or whatever) all the time in my precious RAM? Do I have to use it from another program? Usually the answer is no, but the thing is written as an accessory, take it or leave it. Now, running *MultiDesk* from the desktop I can access any accessory as if it were just a *.PRG program.

Once again, *MultiDesk* is a neatly designed and implemented program, with no-frills documentation more than sufficient to have it up and running in 10 minutes. Is it worth the $31.95 price? This depends on whether you really have a need to reload your accessories dynamically, or to run them from the desktop. If you do (and I sometimes do), then *MultiDesk* does the right thing reliably and without fuss.

Turbo ST

A Dubious Way to Spend $50

This program has been around for a while: I bought it last Spring, and it has gathered dust ever since. Why? This is the story.

What *Turbo ST* does, is speed up some of the screen-writing functions by replacing standard GEM calls with its own. This is a great idea, well demonstrated in *Tempus*, the Ferrari of screen editors.

The principle is sound and clear: put TURBOST.ACC with your other accessories, boot up with it, and activate it from the Desk menu. It will sit in the background, intercepting other programs' calls to GEM screen output routines, and do the GEM's job faster in a manner completely invisible to other programs.

Unfortunately, what SofTrek delivers for a hefty price of $50, falls short of my expectations. The only noticeable effect of the program is speeding up the text output of some programs. Yes, *ST Writer* will write text to screen twice as fast. Yes, text redrawing from ST Basic is speeded up even more noticeably, but that's about it. Some programs (e.g. *Word Writer*) are--I guess--making no calls to the GEM routines replaced by *Turbo ST*, so no effect is visible.

More, *Turbo ST* ignores the font size specified by other programs. Thus, the text output in small or medium font will become completely unreadable while the accessory is active (*Turbo ST* will use the big system font with the small spacing). This is mentioned nowhere in the documentation (to say nothing about the outside of the package). The GDOS font output is not speeded up, either.

Turbo ST does not speed up any other screen output functions, such as redrawing dialog boxes (and these can be annoyingly slow!).

To make it short: do you need *Turbo ST*? Unless you do a lot of work with ST Writer, I don't think so. Even if you do, the relatively steep price is a deterrent. For $50 you can buy *Tempus*, or *WordWriter* or many other programs with much better price-to-capabilities ratio. SofTrek owes us a much better run for our money.

[Just recently SofTrek announced an upgrade to *Turbo ST*. As far as I can understand, the "filled rectangle" function was added in the new version, so my complaint about not speeding up the dialog boxes may no longer be valid. All you need is to send in the original disk and a dollar: this seems a very reasonable upgrade policy. As soon as I receive my disk back, I will share my impressions with you. (Still: fifty bucks for the thing? With or without the rectangles the price is just not right!)]

Universal II

A Passing Grade--And More

John Barnes wrote a detailed (and very enthusiastic) review of the new version 2.01 of *Universal Item Selector* from Application & Design Software--see the November issue of *Current Notes*. Let me add few more remarks.

The original *Universal* was a good idea, somewhat in want of more reliable implementation. After crashing a couple of times when using sliders in the directory window, and after freezing (and having to reboot) when dragging files to function buttons, I had had enough and put the program on the shelf. If anything, a file selector has to be the most reliable program I have. I can't afford to crash trying to save an important file. Some people, however, learned how to avoid dangerous areas and lived happily with *Universal* ever after. Not me.

Now, we have Version 2.01. Is is better? Can it be trusted enough to replace the standard Atari file selector in all uses? Is it worth your money? Yes, yes and yes. If you want an inexpensive and good Christmas present for any Atari ST user, do not think any more. You will be remembered for years to come.

Universal II is a program to be put into your AUTO folder and forgotten about. It will sit in the background quietly until any other program calls the file selector. Then, instead of the reliable but under-designed familiar file selec-

tor box, *Universal* will pop out, with all its goodies.

And goodies it does have. In addition to the drive buttons (no more irritating necessity to retype the path if you want a different drive), all disk operations are accessible from here. Copying, renaming, moving and deleting files, creating and renaming folders, even formatting floppies!

The hard disk users (and maybe not only) will appreciate the possibility of typing in a file name and having *Universal* search for it in all folders nested within the currently displayed path. All wildcard operations relegated my last command shell to the closet, now I can easily rename all *.ACC files into *.ACX ones with one command. And much more. Look into John's article for details.

As opposed to the previous version, the program behaves as an angel. I bought it a month ago and still have to discover something wrong--and this with heavy use from many programs, for about 12 hours a day, at work and at home.

As a programmer, I am very impressed with the program size: it takes just about 24k of RAM. Frankly speaking, I do not know how they did it. Writing in assembly, of course (which, by itself, is a pain), but still: just 24k? With all the goodies? But these are the folks from Grants Pass, Oregon, and they have some outstanding programmers there. (We know their previous public domain offerings, don't we?)

The documentation is just four pages, but contains everything the user may need. Guess who would be paying for a glossy manual?

Can *Universal II* be improved? Of course. I would gladly see the directory window a little wider, so that either the file size, or date, or time can be visible together with the file name, without a need for horizontal scroll. This can be made without any increase of the total width of the dialog box (important for compatibility with some programs): looking closely one can see that spacing between objects in the dialog may be here and there reduced--just to give us the extra 8 or 9 characters we need.

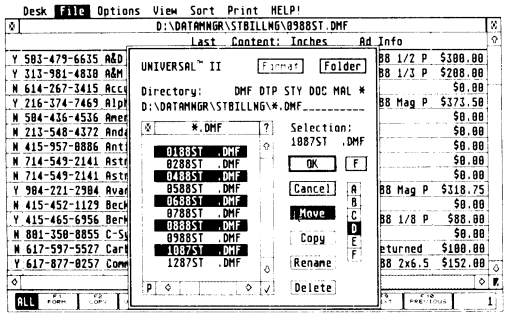
But this is a very minor complaint. After using *Universal* for 20 minutes you get familiar with it; after a few days you wouldn't live without it. And the price is right: $20 (often discounted to $15). If you have the old version, get the original disk to the dealer--the replacement will cost you $4 or so.

Bottom line: go get it. It will change your life.

UNIVERSAL II

Ver. 2.01 Universal Item Selector

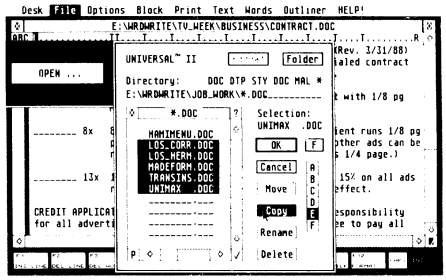
BEST file program available. Complete file manipulation is possible without use of the desktop. Use from within operating programs. With Wildcard features, Group operations are greatly simplified.



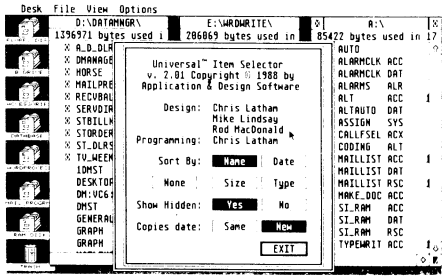
Shift/Click group operations are easy. Just hold down the shift key and select your files for any operation. You can also move up the folder tree by just clicking up the directory line. No more clicking out of each folder to go higher. Just select the superior folder and click on its name; it's that simple.

- **Includes Vertical Drive Selector**
- **Moves / copies / deletes / renames**
- **Uses Wildcards on all files**
- **Prints directories and files**
- **Group operation file status**
- **Hide and Unhide single and groups of files**
- **Lock and Unlock single and groups of files**
- **Find a file on any drive**
- **Only uses 24K of RAM (plus 7K copy buffer)**
- **Programmable Default Features**
- **Remembers last path name used**
- **Never compromise your style again, it does it all**

FREE **RAM disk and print spooler included FREE with each Universal Item Selector purchased.**



Rubberband group operations are possible with all "Action Buttons" featured on Universal. With verticle drive bar and path memory, you no longer have to type in drive path changes.



MODIFY.PRG included with Universal allows the user to set the defaults to their personal preference. Such things as Hidden files, sort type, current or original copy dating, quick extensions and much more.

Application & Design Software
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DALEKS REVISITED!

Hunted, Haunted, Harassed By Malevolent Robots

Review by Don Elmore

Winter is coming. Time to put away the golf sticks and tennis paddles. Perhaps you would be interested in a challenging game that does not require involved preparations to play....one that can be booted and played for anywhere from five minutes to five hours....with you deciding the time limit? In 1986, one of *Current Notes'* PD disks included an unassuming simple little diversion called "DALEKS." Well, I have come to respect that "unassuming" little game. For me, it has become one of the most fiendishly diabolic strategy games that I have come across. Diabolic in that it is frustratingly habit forming. Like the proverbial potato chip...I cannot stop at one (round). Many's the morning when I have almost been late to work....just because I booted DALEKS to relax for a few minutes before heading for the office.

So what is DALEKS all about? You start off on level 1, surrounded by seven DALEKS. The object? Simple...stay alive. If any DALEK touches you, you are dead. If you accidently run into a heap (two or more fried DALEKS), you are dead. How does one stay alive? Easy, kill all the DALEKS. There are three ways to kill DALEKS. One is to cause them to run into each other. This causes them to become a heap, wee little melted/fused DALEKS. A second way is to have them run into a heap. The third way is to use the "Sonic Screwdriver" which is found in the Command window. Now, how do we get DALEKS to run into each other? Well, look at Figure 1. You are surrounded by eight arrows representing the directions in which you can move. You place the mouse arrow over the arrow/direction you want to move and click the left button. Each "turn" is one move, and while you move one space in the desired direction, each of the DALEKS moves in towards you. So, by maneuvering carefully, you can cause the DALEKS to run into each other, and in some cases, you can then position yourself behind the heap and, by clicking on your warrior (instead of the arrows), bring the DALEKS right along to the heap.

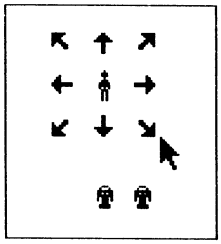


Figure 1

The Sonic Screwdriver can be used once each level. When you click on that option in the Command window, those DALEKS that are adjacent to your warrior, are obliterated. For example, in Figure 2, using the Sonic Screwdriver would wipe out two DALEKS (in the South and Southwest positions). So, the "screwdriver" should not be depended upon except in extreme emergencies. There is another function that may save your warrior's hide. That's the teleport command. The good news is that you will be randomly teleported to another part of the playing field. The bad news is that if you use the teleporter at the higher levels (where more DALEKS abound) you are almost assured of being teleported to a spot where the DALEKS, in their ensuing move, will get you. Now a friendly word about DALEKS reproductive proclivities. Level one presents you with seven of the critters dogging you. Kill them all and progress to level two and they have multiplied to 12. 17 on level three, 22 on four, 27 on five...etc. I have yet to run out of levels, and I have only reached number seven. This is basically a game of skill....but, I want to make one point very clear. As you progress through the levels and the DALEKS become more numerous, you will see that you have much less room in which to maneuver, and that means that you will come to depend more and more on the teleport function. Eventually, you will use the teleport function and land next to a DALEK and "*Adios!*" That usually happens to me just when I am about to beat a previous record, and it can really be frustrating....but there is no way to avoid it. So, yes, skill does play an important part in the game...but there is also the fickle finger of Fate out there, waiting for you... Simple? Yes.....but, I defy you to just play one game and then walk away from it!!

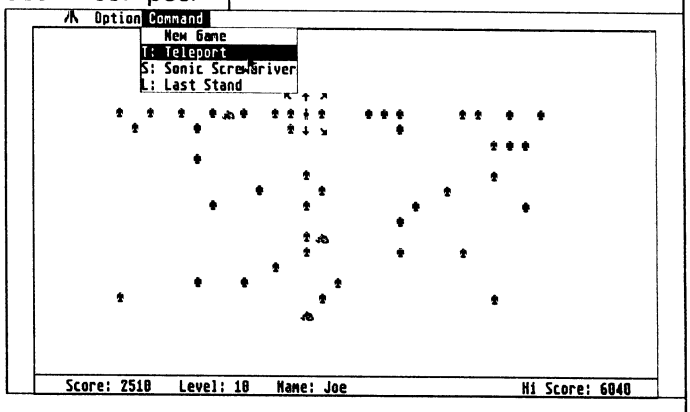


Figure 2

Atari Drive Enhancement

Upgrade Your SH204 For Reliability

Review by Jeff Greenblatt

Fast Storage

A Hard Drive is a wonderful device until it misbehaves. The Atari SH204 20 meg Hard Drive is an extremely economical bytes per buck storage device as compared to a Floppy Disk Drive. It's fast, somewhat compact, and is usually quite reliable. The case is even large enough to install a second drive in it.

According to Berkeley Microsystems, the Atari SH204 Hard Drive has a long standing fault; that is, its inability to report errors to the computer. Among the possible errors this drive currently misses are:

- ✓ Write faults when the drive could not record data at the disk address given.
- ✓ Incomplete seeks when the drive could not move the head to the correct track.
- ✓ Corrupted formatting when a bad block is formatted.
- ✓ Fatal errors caused by reading data from bad blocks.

Since the above errors can go undetected by the ST's operating system, it's only a matter of time before some type of crash occurs. For instance, it is quite possible to write data to blocks on the drive that can not reliably store the data. Even worse, this bad data can be copied to other parts of the drive or backed up onto floppies without the user ever knowing it.....Until it's too late!

Berkeley Microsystems has developed an all-in-one fix for this potential disaster....their Atari Drive Enhancement (ADE) chip. The ADE chip is a replacement part for the Atari Hard Drive that allows it to report errors without degrading the performance of the drive in any way. The ADE chip is a substitute component for the only socketed chip on the Atari Host Adapter board contained within the drive's case.

Installation requires only a screw driver and absolutely no knowledge of electronics. The ADE chip comes with a four page fully illustrated installation manual which shows how to install the chip in seven easy to follow steps. It should take even a novice less than 15 minutes to install the chip. The only disassembly required is to remove the cover screws and replace the only socketed chip on the host adapter.

Just In Case

The installation manual points out that you should back up the hard drive just in case something should go wrong. Hard drive owners do this all the time....don't we? Installation of this chip will void the initial Atari warranty. Don't let this scare you off. All it can do is make the drive more reliable. If need be, wait until the 90 day warranty has expired before installing it.

The manual recommends that the hard drive should be reformatted (after backup, of course) to ensure that there are no bad blocks that might not have been detected when it was previously formatted.

Although I did reformat my hard drive, no bad blocks were detected. After 3 weeks of almost constant use, I haven't experienced any adverse effects in the performance of my hard drive. The installation of the ADE chip does give me a certain amount of security in knowing that if the media within the hard drive does become unusable, I will know about it.

The literature provided by Berkeley Microsystems also points out that the ADE chip also eliminates the "phantom drives" problem associated with adding a second drive to the SH204.

It should also be noted that if you own a Tech-Specialities Hard Drive Kit, which I reviewed in the May '88 issue of Current Notes, some models of this kit used the Atari host adapter. Tech-Specialities is currently using either an Atari or an ICD host adapter. An easy way to tell which one you have is to look at the small aluminum box that's inline with the cable going from the ST to the hard drive case. If the aluminum box has 3 ports (connectors), then you have an ICD adapter; otherwise you have an Atari host adapter. In order to replace the chip in the aluminum box with the ADE chip, you will have to drill out the pop-rivets to open the box. Use short sheet metal screws instead of pop-rivets to re-attach the cover of the aluminum box. That's all there is to it.

[Atari Drive Enhancement - $19.95 - Berkeley Microsystems, P.O. Box 20119, Oakland, CA 94620, (415) 547-2191]

LORDS OF CONQUEST

Is It A Wargame ... Or A Party?

Review by Bill Moes

Lords of Conquest gives you a modest goal: conquer the world.

Borderlands

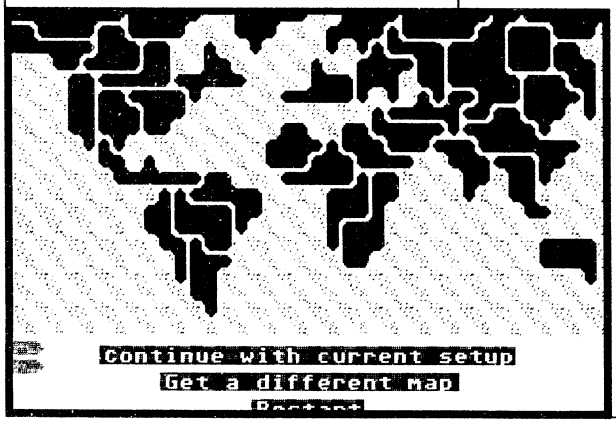
This game could serve as an introductory wargame, although with limitations. One to four players can participate and options offer numerous game levels. Both the mouse and joystick can be used in multi-player games.

Those opening choices are quickly made and then a map is selected: use one of the 24 maps prepared on the disk, let the computer generate a random map following parameters you set, or create your own map on a 40 X 20 grid. These maps will include areas of water along with the land territories to control or conquer.

The game follows standard wargame phases: development, production, trading, shipment, and conquest. These phases are easily understood once you play the game and the software clearly directs you through the choices you have.

Trading is allowed only in three- or four-player games. And the resources available (gold, horses, iron, coal, timber, and boats) are not all available in lower game levels. This is a game taking place in the past. No photon torpedoes here, Captain.

The conquest phase is the most enjoyable and the game is well-named: you won't win if you're an isolationist. Select a territory to conquer. Then (optionally) move a boat, weapon, or horse to aid the attack. The odds for a victory are shown before you need to make a final conquest decision. Lands bordering yours are usually the best ones to attack.



Winning the game is determined by conquering or developing a number (3-7) of cities. The computer is a decent opponent in quickly-played (15-20 min.) one-player games. Watching that computer opponent is a good way to learn strategy for the game.

Quirks

I noticed only one problem. There's a utilities menu to use for the game-save and music toggle. The cursor speed on that utilities menu would occasionally be very slow. Usually, however, cursor speed would be fine.

Runes

The 12-page documentation explains the software well enough. The game has been ported to many computers and the documentation is written for them all, although this isn't really too difficult to deal with here. *Lords of Conquest* is also available for the Atari 8-bit computers (CN Nov. 1986).

The programmer for the ST version, Brent Thale, took good advantage of some ST features: the color of your territories can be chosen from a displayed palette of 128 and color cycling animation may be used on the water areas. You can change the design used to color those water areas. And the ST version plays faster than the others. The map graphics, however, are very reminiscent of early 8-bit computer graphics: chunky, simple, blocky.

Cosmic Balance

Lords of Conquest's designer, Eon Software, is remembered by boardgame fans for its easily and enjoyably played games. You may have noticed those games as the bold-faced section titles within this review. Indeed, *Lords of Conquest* is based on the Eon boardgame, Borderlands.

I enjoyed this one, but be aware of its strengths and weaknesses. For one or two players, *Lords of Conquest* is a low-priced ($19.95) introductory wargame. It is very basic. There is no stacking of combat units. Generally, you're allowed just one attacking unit in a combat situation.

In keeping with its Eon heritage, while *Lords of Conquest* is acceptable as that simple one- or two-player game, its real strength is shown when the trading option is used in three- and four-player games. So, have a little party! The resulting player interaction adds a valuable new dimension.

[Electronic Arts, 1820 Gateway Dr., San Mateo, CA 94404 (415) 571-7171]

Asteroids Deluxe

They're everywhere. Asteroids all around. I'm caught. There's something else, now! No!! Alert! Alert! Ale....

The stick is shoved forward and I thrust out of the asteroid's path. A flip to the side turns the craft. Firing on the rocks. They're hit and they break into small bits. Still dangerous so I continue the fire.

A saucer glides across the screen, firing at me. Shields up. Protection for a moment.

One or two players. A classic challenge.

[Asteroids Deluxe, Atari Corp.]

ST Arcade News

Three Challenges For Your Twisted Stick

ST arcade games are very popular and very numerous. The prices for these two will vary with the dealer, but may be around $35.

Chubby Gristle

Call me Chubby. Chubby Gristle.

I've got a job to do. I jump. I climb. And I travel. Across screen after screen. New puzzles. New challenges. I face them all.

Sure I'm cute. Ever know anyone called Chubby who wasn't cute? Colorful. Smooth. Lots of motion. Like I said: cute.

But the challenges! *You can't park here!* Who wants to park, anyway. And where's the *Filling up station*? So I move around. I'm after treasures and points. And I move on. *Trespassers will be sat on!* I don't want to be under any pressure.

It's an easy start. Sure it is. To dodge the flying bombs. To defeat alligators at the main drain. To dream the impossible dream, maybe.

There are puzzles to solve, strategies to develop, a joystick to twist.

It's a real challenge. It takes a lot. The jumping and climbing and going off the side of one screen to enter a new screen. And new sights.

They said it right with those three words: *Good luck, Chubby.*

Bomb Jack

I came. I saw. I flew.

The bombs are all around me now. It's tense. I jump. Up. My wings carry me. Onto platforms and across the landscape. I touch a bomb and it's gone.

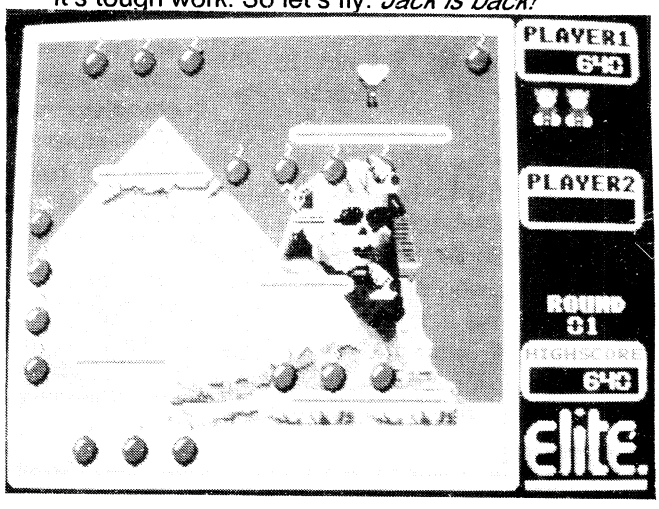
Egypt's pyramids and the sphinx are my first assignment. Not too tough. Then I move on. Around the world. The ruins of ancient Greece had better not be my ruin. Always I need to keep away from *them.* Those creatures with eyes of screaming blood. And they multiply quickly. But there's help. There's a way to freeze the evil in the scene. It gives me time to stop the burning fuses. A few fuses.

The exotic locales are colorful and I may want to stop and look. No! I can't. There's no time for postcards.

I know if I need a break, I can have a friend along. We'll take turns and see who gets the higher score. But I know what it'll be. I know how I end up too often. I already know the score.

So where the bombs are, there am I. Almost poetic, isn't it. I fly. But, boys, I'm not Mary Poppins.

It's tough work. So let's fly. *Jack is back!*



An Alternative to dBMAN?

by John Barnes

Introduction

With the release of its *Superbase Professional* relational database management system for Atari ST computers, Precision Incorporated of Irving, TX has provided an alternative for some of those people who took one look at the manual for *dBMAN* and decided to do something other than databases.

The addition of a programming language as an adjunct to the functionality of *Superbase Personal*, which I reviewed in the June *Current Notes*, gives the user the power and flexibility that are crucial to serious database work.

Few people will believe they want this power, and fewer still will be able to use it, but the fact that it is available implies that people who need good tools to arrange information can get them. It is surprising how often something that ought to be simple gets complicated. As compilers for database languages become more widespread we are seeing more applications that funnel this power to the ordinary computer user.

What's in the Box

Superbase Professional comes in a fat version of the familiar stiff, book-size, cardboard box. The box contains two manuals totalling around 400 pages, four disks, and the usual registration forms. You will pay something close to $200 for this product in stores. Contact Precision, Inc. regarding upgrades from earlier products.

The first manual is used if you are not working with language or forms editors, it is basically a complete revamp of the earlier *Superbase Personal* manual. The second manual deals with the control language and the forms editor. Neither manual is well indexed, nor are there enough examples, but the reference material is adequately arranged. A bit of page turning will usually reveal something helpful.

The four disks include the program disk (this is also the key disk for protection), the forms editing program, GDOS for use with the forms editor, and a disk with several rather dull example applications.

Superbase has been around since the days of Commodore Business Machines. Versions of *Superbase Pro* are available for the Amiga, the Atari ST, and MS-DOS. Precision Inc indicates that sales distribute themselves approximately 50-40-10 among the three systems.

This review covers version 2.03 and some of my criticisms may become moot when version 3 appears. Ver. 3 is said to be shipping for the Amiga, but the Atari version has been held up. Precision plans an impressive array of support services to developers and the copy of the *Superbase Journal* that they sent me is quite nice. Such support is, however, going to cost. Some users have had good experiences with telephone support.

Improvements

The improvements described here are vis-a-vis the copy of *Superbase Personal* that I used for my review in the June *Current Notes*. I cannot be sure if they are applicable to the most recent version of the *Personal* product.

The documentation is better written, but this is not saying much.

There are a number of nice features like function key definitions, instant access to the command line, internal editing for external text files, and others of that ilk which contribute to a nicer product.

The programming language is a whole subject unto itself, which will be discussed later.

Work Still to be Done

A vertical slider bar for positioning the record cursor in the Table view mode (a la *Data Manager ST*) would be a huge help. I have gotten more or less used to the Boom Box control buttons (although I still do not like them) and I know that I can add new movements by defining my own function key equivalents.

The documentation needs more work. It is still poorly indexed (the terms "relational", "link", or "join", for example, do not appear in the index to either part of Volume 2). Explanations of critical features like recalculation are still lacking. Clearer explanations of relational linking are needed in several places.

I found myself wandering through the documentation trying to build a coherent picture of some relatively simple processes. I found the examples supplied by Precision anything but readable.

DBASE III has spawned a complete cottage industry of people who write tutorial and example books, perhaps Precision Inc should seed some activity along this line. I would rather pay $20 for a good book than for telephone calls.

In *dBMAN,* I often use composite indexes, which are expressions containing data from multiple fields. I have not found a sensible way to do this in *Superbase* because of the way recalculation is carried out. *Superbase* also seems a little slow when building its indexes.

What Is a Database?

A database is an ordered collection of information. Database management software provides tools defining the structure of the collection, for entering data into the collection, for querying the collection to display selected portions of its contents, and for facilitating the storage and retrieval of this information on the hardware devices that are available to the host computer.

One "model" for arranging data into ordered structures is the "relational" model, first explored by E.F. Codd in 1970. In this model the data is treated as a collection of tables. Each row of the table describes one unit of information. The columns ("attributes") of the table contain particular components of our unit of information. All values of a particular attribute are of the same type. Some database implementations refer to the rows as "records" and to columns as "fields." In subsequent sections I provide examples to clarify these notions.

I use the term "file manager" for database management products that handle a single table at a time. *Data Manager ST* from Timeworks, *Datatrieve* from Abacus, and any of the spreadsheet products fall into this category.

"Relational" Database Management

In order to earn the "Relational" designation, a database management product must be capable of maintaining linkages between two or more tables based on common values of particular attributes (Dr Codd's definition goes a bit further than this, though). *dBMAN* and *Superbase Professional* are the principal relational database management products available to the Atari ST community. The review of Regent Base in the June *Current Notes* was based on a beta test version, and I have not seen the product in the marketplace.

Relational database management products should also support operations that constitute a simple "algebra" for manipulating tables. This implies support by some sort of a programming language. This in turn implies programming. Sorry, Charlie, there's just no other way.

Most people who maintain mailing lists, record libraries, video tape collections, recipe files, ... etc. should be perfectly happy to use a file manager. This spares them the burden of reading through extensive documentation and they are effectively shielded from confusing concepts. Some people who really could get by with a file manager have been attracted to *Superbase* because it provides for external images and text files as attribute values or because its query and report generating features are more sophisticated than those available with the usual file manager. These people will do fine with *Superbase Personal.* Some of these people will be able to persuade others to write *Superbase Professional* programs for them and thereby gain improved functionality.

A Sample Application

Adhering to my belief that a database management system has not been tested until I have used it to build my own application, I devised a relational database for cataloguing disk files. Actually this is a translation of an application that I am still refining in *dBMAN.*

There are three primary tables: FILLIST, PATHS, and VOLUMS. Creating the structures is the most important part of building a database and *Superbase Professional* lets you do this by pointing and clicking or by means of the programming language. I prefer the latter approach because it is self-documenting, other people prefer the former because it is more "intuitive."

The fname, fext, fdate, ftime, and size attributes of the FILLIST table are the normal information that we see when looking at a file in a directory window. I have kept fname and fext separate for later convenience in querying. The path_num and volnum attributes are used to link the FILLIST table to the PATHS and VOLUMS tables respectively.

The PATHS table contains the complete names of the subdirectories in which the files are found. There is no sense repeating this for each file in the FILLIST table because the information would take up too much space there. The path_num attribute, which is a simple numeric code, links the FILLIST and PATHS tables so that the correct path name can always be associated with a file name. The VOLUMS table contains descriptive information about the disk volumes. The 12 character volume ID that is supplied at formatting time is a useful way to separate disks. Each volume is assigned a unique vol_num when its data is added to the collection. This links the FILLIST and PATHS tables to the VOLUMS table. The linkage between FILLIST and VOLUMS is redundant because the path_num linkage achieves the same thing, but it is convenient in certain queries.

The lodate, hidate, and fkount attributes in the PATHS table are used to track the oldest file date, newest file date, and total number of files in a path. These attributes are updated during the database update cycle, as are the analogous attributes of the VOLUMS table.

Any database product that does not provide an IMPORT function should pack up and go home. Unfortunately *Data Manager ST* is one of these and the people at Timeworks do not seem anxious to do anything about it. *Superbase Pro*'s IMPORT function is limited to delimited text files, but I can live with this, at least for the time being.

The DML language

All of this work could have been done in *Superbase Personal*, but I decided to do the macho thing, and use a program written in *Superbase Pro*'s DML (Data Management Language). This is where the project almost got bogged down. There is nothing really wrong with the language, it reminds me of an archaic BASIC with a little Structured Query Language (SQL) thrown in for flavoring.

With a bit of tedious work the programmer can avail himself of all the glitter of GEM, support for communications port allows networking of machines for database updating, modular programming is supported through CHAINing, and access to external GEM applications is supported by a CALL mechanism. The modular programming mechanism within a program is still the old-fashioned GOSUB using global memory variables. There is a lot of power here.

The editing tools are, however, primitive to say the least. There is no indenting for clarity. Block operations for moving or copying text are very cumbersome. You can only import an externally created text file by fooling the editor into believing that it is dealing with an .SBP file (the file type that *Superbase Pro* uses for its programs). Once you have saved the file you can no longer edit it externally because it has been tokenized. There is no provision for directing a listing of the program to a disk file. I found the keystrokes for using the built-in editor unlike anything else I had ever used. In short, programming in this language has a lot of unnecessary barriers to getting started. Developers will surely want better tools than these for long term work.

Never a willing victim of defeat, I persevered and got all of the data loaded in.

I then decided to try a very simple relational query. The *Superbase* query definition for this appears in Figure 1. Note that all three tables are referenced. The expression in the query filter line (part of which is hidden) sets up the link (or join) between the three

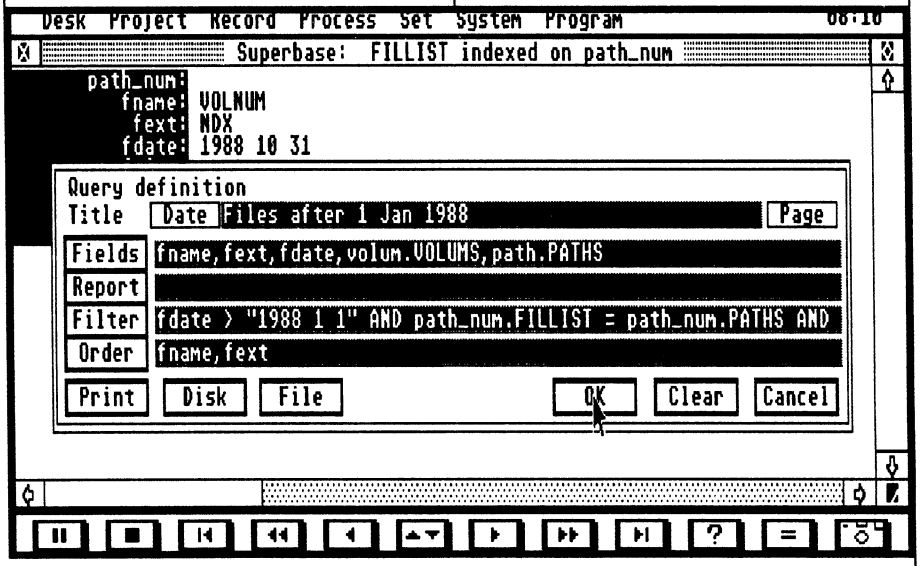


Figure 1 – Query Generated by using Process Query Edit. Note the occurrence of fields from different files.

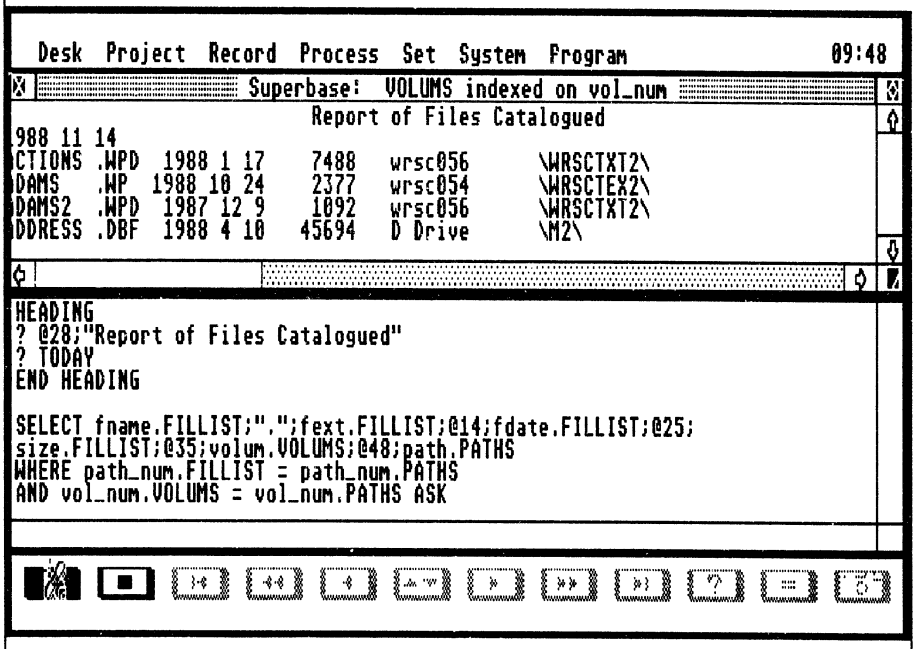


Figure 2 – DML version of Query in Figure 1. The WHERE clause specifies the relational links. Top part shows report as output to screen.

tables. The Query Edit function in the *Superbase* Process menu is a form of "application generator" in that it creates code to carry out a certain process while convincing the user that he is not programming. I got a satisfactory listing of my file names together with the expanded versions of their volume ID's and path names.

It would be nice if the Query editor generated real code that could be directly manipulated with the program editor. Code from the query editor can be executed from a program with a statement of the form "LOAD QUERY qname;? QUERY."

The report generator that can be accessed through the Forms editor is another application generator that can help speed up report creation. This module actually generates a program that can be edited and run. A sample, which performs the query described above, is shown in Figure 2. The relational link is easier to see in the written code. Part of the resulting screen report also appears in Figure 2.

The forms editor can be used to generate pretty jazzy layouts for entering data, displaying it, and controlling program flow. All of the GEM tools can be used.

There are plenty of subtleties here and the same cautions apply as in learning any other programming language. Be patient, keep at it, try and try again.

Conclusion

I've gotten flak from some quarters because of my statements on some of *Superbase Personal*'s deficiencies. The person who road tests a Porsche does not do the product justice if he just drives it back and forth to Sunday School. If readers want to experience some of my aggravation they should try to do some of the things I have tried to do.

Superbase Professional is a good product. It would be my first choice in certain applications, but not in others. Perhaps I will feel differently once I get some more experience programming with Superbase Professional. However, I do feel that the developers of this product can still do a lot to spruce it up.

The learning curve here is bound to be very steep and the effort is probably worthwhile only for those who are truly motivated to learn programming. People should not flame this product because it is difficult. Driving a Porsche at over 100 miles an hour is also not for the uninitiated. *Superbase Professional* is, however, not a Lamborghini and I doubt seriously that it will contribute much to the ST's position in the work place, at least in its present form.

The DML language is reasonably logical, but the development tools (the file structures and the program editor) have serious deficiencies. As far as I am concerned they could save a lot of code by dispensing with their editors altogether and letting me call up my favorite ASCII editor. Some Pascal compilers do this and *dBMAN V* is supposed to. I also don't see any virtue in tokenized files, let everything be in straight ASCII so that files can be moved around easily.

The world is not standing still in the database area. VersaSoft should be shipping *dBMAN V* any day now. Gentlemen, go to your corners and come out swinging.

The codes that I mentioned in the text are available to anyone who wants them, just send EMAIL to JOHN BARNES on ARMUDIC. If there is sufficient interest I will upload them to GEnie.

[Precision, Incorporated, 8404 Sterling St, Suite A, Irving, TX 75063 (214) 929-4888]

GFA BASIC VERSION 3.0

It's For You!

By Stephen D. Eitelman

Introduction

MichTron has recently released version 3.0 of their highly successful GFA Basic interpreter. Their earlier versions have established a virtual standard for ST programming. This latest version is destined to do the same. Version 3.0 adds about 300 new commands; most dialects of basic don't have this many total! One of the reviewers has called this a "smorgasbord" basic; I agree. It is just about inconceivable that there is something that CANNOT be done in GFA Basic 3.0. In fact, it ought to make for a lively contest to start a dialog "I have found something GFA won't do" followed quickly by "Oh, no you haven't--here's how to do it." Then offer the writer who goes unanswered for say 6 months (weeks?) a free wouff hong or something equally valuable. (All you hams out there, explain to your computer brethren what a wouff hong is.)

MichTron's ads claim speed increases of 40 to 60 per cent. Take this with a grain of salt; it's only true under some circumstances. See the section on speed for details. But for increased speed as well as stand alone programs, wait for the companion compiler. It's due out soon, according to MichTron, and I believe them. They don't seem to specialize in vaporware, unlike a certain hardware company we all know and love.

Note that the earlier version of the GFA Basic compiler is NOT compatible with GFA Basic 3.0. However, programs written with the earlier versions of the **interpreter** are compatible with this new version. They are loaded through the MERGE command, after doing a SAVE,A to create an ASCII version. There is a message here: don't give away your earlier version of GFA Basic; it's needed to create ASCII files of programs that are to be transferred to version 3.0.

The manual is an overwhelming 625 pages long. Each command is described with generally pretty fair clarity. The enormous size of the vocabulary is initially pretty intimidating, but this is still Basic: one is not required to learn the entire language for any given task. Just like English, a small portion of the vocabulary will be adequate for many programmers' unique needs.

> ....the list of new commands and new features seems endless.....

The new commands include all AES commands, many of the VDI commands, Line-A commands, joystick commands, multiple line functions, bit operations, a new structure command (SELECT - CASE - DEFAULT - ENDSELECT), single byte integers (for speed), two different sort commands, a resource construction set, an eight byte, 13 decimal digit precision variable, joystick commands, interrupt programming (EVERY nnn GOSUB <proc>), assembly language calls, the list seems endless just trying to categorize the new features.

The retail price is about $100; $40 to upgrade from an earlier version.

Editor

Anyone who has used earlier versions of GFA Basic will be right at home with the improved editor. It retains the "look and feel" of the old one. The most noticeable difference upon booting up is the Atari logo at the left hand end. Clicking on the logo provides access to a line counter and clock. Another major revision to the earlier editor is the redefinition of the numeric keypad. When used with the control key, the cursor can be repositioned. Line insert and character delete are also available from the keypad.

The editor now allows for a "Hide" command wherein the code associated with a given Procedure is hidden; only the name remains. This is a great aid in debugging complex programs when the program flow, structure or logic are in question. The Hide feature removes distracting detail.

Marks can be set in long programs at critical points to facilitate rapidly moving the cursor to that portion of the program. This is a highly useful feature during debugging of particularly long programs. An additional trace command has been added, TRACE$, that allows one to trace variables during trial execution of the program.

Manual

The manual, as previously mentioned, is quite long. I found it reasonably easy to use, although some of the command descriptions were difficult to understand due to lack of thorough editing. Nonetheless, the manual is remarkably complete. It contains both a table of contents and an index, a combination I find to be indispensable. Sometimes I only have a vague idea of what I want; in this case, the table of contents is the place to look. At other times, I keep getting a syntax error from a command I want but have forgotten the details of. Then the index is necessary. There are 14 chapters and 13 appendices. The chapters are organized by major function. For instance, there are chapters on General Input and Output, Program Structure, Graphics, etc. I found the organization to be very logical and had no trouble when I needed a command to do something but didn't know what it was.

The command descriptions are somewhat formal and not always clear, but seem to always include at least one example. The examples do an excellent job of demonstrating how the command works; would that other software producers were so careful! Although not a part of GFA Basic 3.0, MichTron and Abacus are marketing a number of other books that should provide programmers of any level of expertise with all the reference and tutorial material needed.

Speed

The chart below shows the results of my speed benchmarks. Version 3.0 is indeed faster than v. 2.0 except for a rather severe floating point test, cosine squared of every integer between 1 and 10000. This actually took longer in ver. 3.0 than in ver. 2.0. The reason, of course, is increased number of digits that must be computed. Ver. 2.0 only computes the cosine out to 11 digits; ver. 3.0 goes out to 13 digits. Trig functions are particularly nasty to get more significant figures: they oscillate about the true answer, converging only slowly, so lots more time is required for modest increases in accuracy. In fact, it is somewhat surprising that the slow-down was not much worse.

Speed Benchmarks: GFA BASIC V2, V3, and ST Basic

	A	B	C	D	E	F
GFA BASIC V2	15.5	13.0	6.1	7.2	23.5	34.3
GFA BASIC V3	17.9	10.1	4.5	4.6	18.1*	20.4
ST BASIC	38.0	251.0	31.4	59.0	304.0	105.0

Test times are in seconds.
A: Cosine squared, for 1 to 1000
B: Sieve of Eratosthenes, 10 iterations, n=2047
C: BYTE magazine floating point calculation benchmark
D: Generate 1000 random strings
E: Sort 1000 random strings in alphabetical order
F: Print sorted strings to screen
* Using SSORT: 0.95, using QSORT: 0.82 seconds.

The most dramatic improvement came in the sort test. The original used a bubble sort that took 22 lines of code. When I switched to the use of SSORT and QSORT (for shell sort and quick sort respectively), the 22 lines dropped down to one very simple one: SSORT aa$. Then came the speed-up. For SSORT, speed improved by a factor of over 19 to 1. For QSORT, the speed-up ratio was just over 22. In percentages, these figures are 1900% and 2200%. Now that is some improvement! To be honest, however, the bubble sort is terribly inefficient for highly disordered data such as generated by random number generators, so we are seeing mostly an improvement in the underlying algorithm. Still.....

See the table below for results of ST Basic speed test. The results speak eloquently for themselves.

Bugs

There is a topic on GEnie devoted to bug reporting in GFA Basic, v 3.0. At the time this article was written, there were sixty messages there. This does NOT mean there were sixty bugs reported! Most of it was discussion. In fact, there only seem to be two real live bugs and these are arguable:

The cursor does not reappear after it is hidden in a program upon returning to the editor. This is because GEM has been instructed to turn it off and GEM leaves it off until told otherwise. Period. GEM does not care in the slightest that the "application" has been changed. Well, GFA regards this as a bug and promises to fix it. The easy interim fix is to use ON ERROR SHOWM or some such technique for calling SHOWM.

There is a mostly non-reproducible problem with copying blocks from one part of the program to another while in the editor. Sometimes the block copy operation will lock up the computer. This was reported twice, but Michtron programmers were unable to reproduce it. Desk accessory conflict??

A portion of the discussion was devoted to problems with the

demos. Some of them were written for monochrome monitors and they crash systems using color monitors. So a word to the wise...

There was a moderate amount of complaining about the manual. There are a few errors, typos and misleading statements. I never had any real trouble deciphering it, but it is not as well edited as it could be. But in comparison to the version 1.0 manual, this one is enduring literature!

It seems that there will be some upgrade to fix the few bugs being found; so far, none of them are fatal. For the casual programmer, you probably won't detect them at all. Watch for ver. 3.1.

Conclusions

Even if your interest in programming is only a slight dab of occasional curiosity provoked by "I wonder how that is done?", GFA Basic 3.0 is for you. It is the most complete language for any computer I have ever seen. It is easy to use, retaining the appeal for beginners that Basic has had since its inception at Dartmouth back around the Pleistocene era. For the advanced programmer, it contains all the tools to create professional programs, especially once the compiler is available. MichTron provides excellent support and the documentation is likewise excellent. There is a good chance that there will be an upgrade, although there has been no actual statement by Michtron to that effect; I am just speculating.

Other periodicals are beginning to review GFA Basic 3.0. By the time this review is printed, there should be a full review in *STart* and *ST Log. ST Informer*, issue no. 15 for September 1988, has already provided us with a comprehensive review. They liked it too!

GFA BASIC PRIMERS

Three for the Programmers

Reviewed by Pamela Rice Hahn

GFA BASIC TRAINING REBOOT CAMP, by Dorothy Brumleve and Michael Marks

This book is an easy-to-understand, well-written tutorial introduction to GFA BASIC. The first chapter details the GFA BASIC Editor. The following chapters guide the user through programming, covering such aspects as simple graphics, graphics text, reading the mouse, graphics commands, sound, and using DATA. Each chapter concludes with a brief test reviewing the topics covered. And, as promised, I found the authors delivered on their commitment of presenting progressive steps to learn this language.

REBOOT CAMP includes a 10-page quick reference appendix of commands and functions used in the book. Each entry contains a brief explanation of the entry as well as mention of which chapter covers that entry.

[Michtron, (313) 334-5700. Index. 259 pages. $19.95.]

GFA BASIC BOOK w/disk, by GFA Systemtechnik

This manual was written by Frank Ostrowski, author of the GFA BASIC interpreter. The author assumes the reader already has an understanding of the language and is now ready to learn some of the more complicated, powerful aspects of his creation.

The book begins with a pleasant introduction regarding the origins of the language and how Ostrowski, after having written a published BASIC for the Atari 8-bit, was recruited by GFA Systemtechnik GmbH to write a version of that language for the ST. Subsequent chapters cover optimization (figuring out which part of your program is making it run so s-l-o-w), graphics, tips & programs (dialog boxes homemade, sound, scan codes, fonts, etc.), GEMDOS, BIOS, XBIOS, AES, RSC, and using windows.

The disk included with the book contains the 75+ programs and files covered in the book.

[Michtron, (313) 334-5700. Index. 308 pages, $29.95.]

GFA BASIC QUICK PROGRAM REFERENCE GUIDE for the Atari ST, by Uwe Litzkendorf and Michael Hosel

If you haven't already figured it out after considering the authors' names, this is another Data Becker book distributed by ABACUS. Unfortunately, some ABACUS titles distributed in the past have been plagued by typos. I have not gone over each and every aspect of the command explanations given in this book, so I cannot testify whether or not this book is free from such errors.

I can advise this is a handy addition for those wanting an alternative reference on GFA BASIC. The book begins with a brief, 9-page general introduction to GFA BASIC. The bulk of the book is an alphabetical listing of that language's commands, most of which contain an example as well as an explanation. The "Error Messages" section gives explanations for editor error, BASIC error, TOS error, and bomb error messages. The book also has three (count 'em three) indexes--a quick index, a subject index, and a general index.

(ABACUS, 5370 52nd Street SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49508. 214 4 1/2 x 8" pages.)

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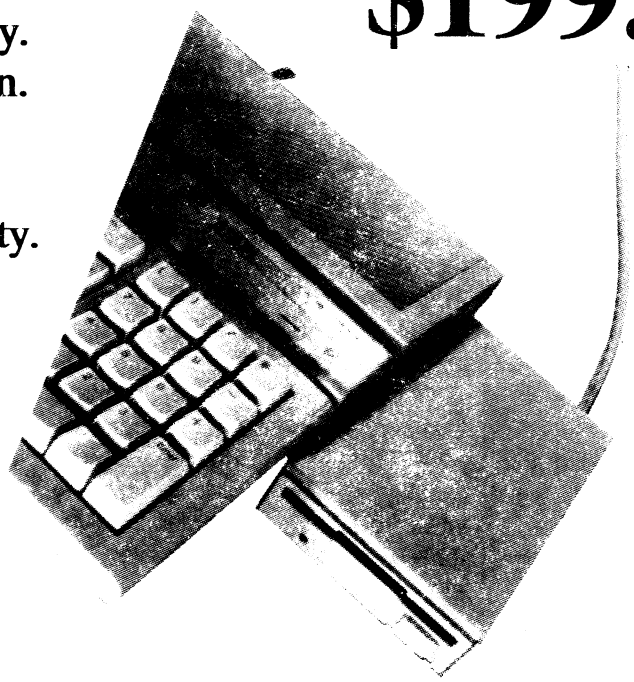

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GFA DRAFT PLUS

Not--Ready--for--Prime--Time, European, CAD Import

Reviewed by Sam Wang

Most ST users should be familiar with the name GFA by now, with excellent titles such as *GFA Basic, GFA Objects,* and *GFA Vectors*, among others. This line of German software has been imported and distributed in this country by Michtron, and has earned a healthy respect for its quality. It is among the best ST software available today. With that background, I looked forward to trying out *GFA Draft Plus* with enthusiasm. Unfortunately, the experience fell short of my expectations, though it's not necessarily the software's fault.

A Long Read

My first step was to read the manual thoroughly. I took it with me on a trip, and it made good reading at airports, particularly the parts that reminded me of instruction manuals for Japanese cameras from the 1950's. I chuckled to myself. Knowing that it's not easy to translate from German to English, I was grateful for the two years of German I took in college that helped me get used to the, at times, odd sentence structure.

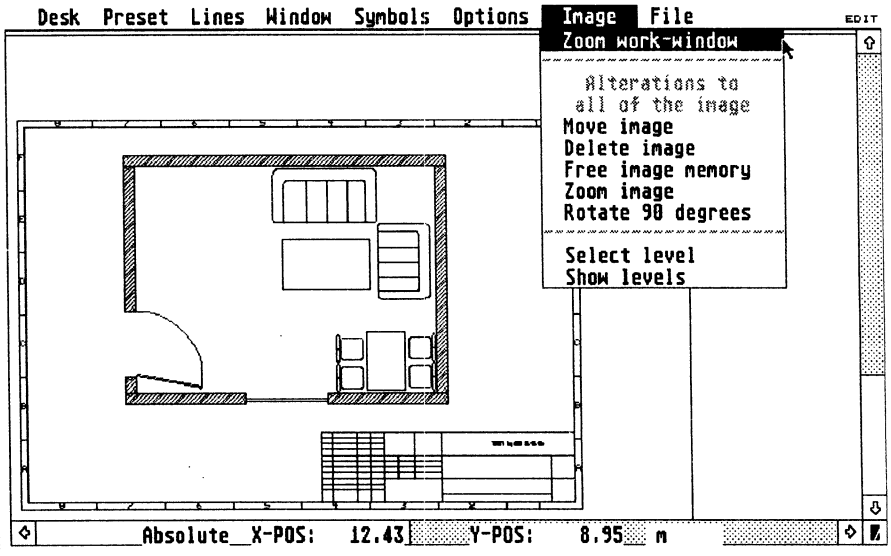
The stated capabilities of this software package really impressed me. It appeared that it did just about everything the $2500 *AutoCad* would do, if not more! *AutoCad* is no great program, even though it is recognized as a standard in the industry. Although I hated using *AutoCad*, it was easy to learn, and I did not need a manual to start using it. What I don't like about it is the lack of spontaneity in use, the slowness due to constant disk access, and the fact that it is a drafting package, and does not lend itself to "design." GFA Draft Plus looked like it had everything AutoCad lacked. Or so I thought while reading the instruction manual.

Ah, but the term "instruction manual" is not apt here. When I finally booted the program up, I found that there was little resemblance between the manual and the application! Even the words used on the menu bar weren't the same as in the manual! I thought I had studied the manual pretty thoroughly, but when it came to actual experience, I was lost. A simple tutorial exercise took me over three hours to complete, and that's after numerous unrecoverable mistakes. Fortunately I followed the advice for saving my work regularly, otherwise I don't think I could have completed the elementary drawing of a room with a couple of tables, four chairs, a couple of sofas, and a weird looking lamp (Figure 1). At this point I gave up. But before I did so, I managed to print my work out on the HP DeskJet. The print-out was very high in quality.

Full Featured

Let's look at the features this CAD package is stated to have:

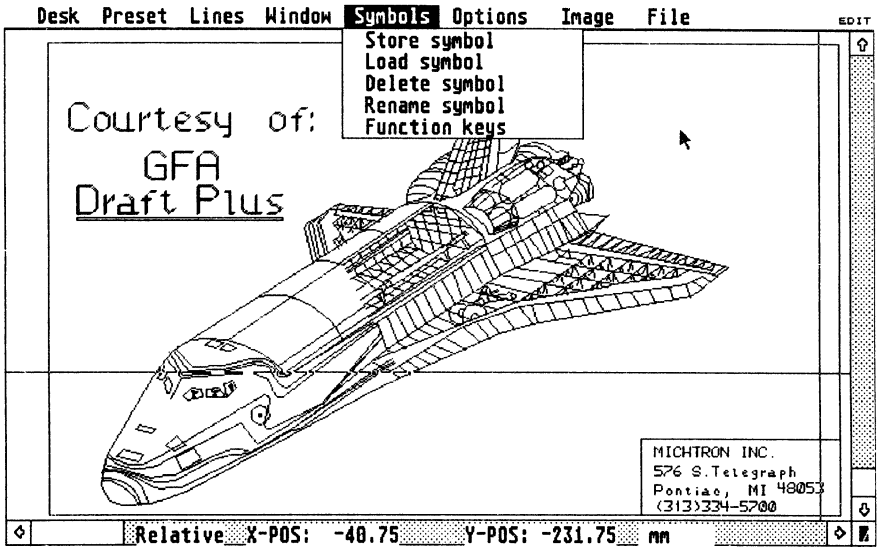
- ☆ GEM interface; on the menu bar, key items include Preset, Lines, Window, Symbols, Special (actually Options in the program), Picture (actually Image in the program), and Files.
- ☆ Cursor positions are shown in Absolute, Relative, or Distance, in metric or in inches and 10ths-of-an-inch (no FEET, even using dimensioning).
- ☆ Zoom range goes from 8:1 to 1:8 in fixed steps.
- ☆ Several line types and thicknesses can be specified (in mm).
- ☆ Text can be rotated. Since the characters are vector based, they can be skewed, enlarged,



The 3 Hour Simple Practice Example

etc. (Immediately after the creation of text as well as any other object, the left mouse button is held down to move the object to the desired location. A second click of the left mouse button fixes the object in place. The right mouse button often works as an ESCAPE key, and may be used to cancel an operation.)

- ☆ Window contents can be deleted, zoomed, rotated, reflected, or selected for further manipulations.
- ☆ Draw function works with Rectangle, Circle, Circle Segment, Ellipse Segment, Arc by 3 Points, and Rounded Corners.
- ☆ Lines may be created Perpendicular, at a specified Angle, or Parallel to a Line, or Tangent to a Circle.
- ☆ Hatching: angle and spacing of lines can be specified.
- ☆ Up to ten layers (called Levels) can be used, which shows the scope of the intended usefulness of the package.
- ☆ Symbol libraries can be created and saved for later use.
- ☆ Function keys (macros) can be predefined, and also saved for later use.
- ☆ Deleting w/ BACKSPACE and DELETE keys are some of the nicest features: BACKSPACE deletes vectors, characters, or symbols one at a time in reverse order of creation, while the DELETE key is pressed to delete the vector, character, or symbol nearest to the cursor. The UNDO key works in undoing the last deletion by either method.
- ☆ Command Line: very powerful shortcuts can be made with typed COMMANDS. COMMANDS can be chained, saved, and edited in GFA BASIC or any text editor. It is possible to use models created in GFA Object, which offers an option to save pictures for GFA Draft Plus.
- ☆ Printing and plotting can be configured to a wide range of devices in different resolutions.
- ☆ The manual states that GFA DRAFT PLUS is an Advanced Computer Drafting tool for the Atari ST AND for the IBM-PC (hmm, interesting. Haven't seen the IBM version, I can only hope that it's better).



A Shuttle Picture Must Come With All CAD Programs

Deficiencies

The major problems with this CAD package, other than the gaw-dawful manual, boil down to the following:

- × It basically uses the metric system. Measurement in inches and tenths of inches is downright ridiculous, and severely limits its usefulness.
- × Files are not compatible with any other CAD system, such as AutoCad . The standard DXF format for exchanging files is not supported.
- × Constant disk access: it resembles AutoCad , but worse. The slightest scrolling requires disk access. This is more than annoying with a hard drive, and it practically renders floppy based only systems unusable.
- × Awkward mouse response. Mouse buttons sometimes need to be held down for a lengthy half a second or so before effects take place.

With the reasonable price (street price as low as $99), it would seem that one shouldn't expect too much out of a REAL CAD package. In some ways that's true. It all depends on what the purchaser expects. If he (or she) just wants a neat and powerful program to play with, this may be alright. For productivity, even for those with plenty of experience, this is a hard package to master. Expect a long learning curve. For low level CAD and graphics, one may wish to use EASY DRAW or any of the CAD programs for the Mac (with help from Dave Small's SPECTRE 128) instead, or at least till MICHTRON improves the measurement system in GFA DRAFT PLUS and rewrites the manual and tutorial.

[GFA Draft Plus - Michtron - Pontiac, MI - (313) 334-5700 $159.95]

DR. STRANGE DRIVE

The Truth About The Discovery Cartridge

By David Glotfelty

Something New

The Discovery Cartridge from Happy Computers, Inc. is definitely an advance in hardware capability for ST computers. This 4"x3"x2" cartridge connects by disk cables to both the computer drive port and the 'IN' drive port on the first external drive. (If your unit only has an internal drive the cartridge goes only to the computer drive port.) The cartridge itself plugs into the ROM cartridge slot.

The cartridge is advertized by Happy Computers as having two main capabilities: reading and writing of Apple Macintosh format disks, and backing up even the most heavily protected diskettes.

Having tested this product over the past three days with a Mega 2, a 520ST with one meg upgrade, two single sided drives, and two double sided drives I can say that the cartridge works as promised. Apple Macintosh variable speed disks can be easily converted to MAGIC/SPECTOR format for use with Mac emulator cartridges. (Though the online write/read capability contained in the Translator drive is not provided.) Disks with heavy copy protection such as *Gunship, Dungeon Master,* and *Defender of the Crown* may now be backed up--complete with the original copy protection.

While the product works, it definitely has a few shortcomings. First, when I opened the box from Happy Computers I found a cartridge, one disk cable, a few stickers for the outside of the cartridge, and a disk of software. No manual was included. Yet, one of the cited reasons for the protracted delay in shipping had been "typesetting of the manuals." The documentation on how to use the product was on the disk--but for a product of this price typeset documention (like Dave Small's beautiful manual for the Spectre product) is a minimal expectation.

Big Price Tag

That brings us to the second problem area, price. The Discovery cartridge is advertized by Happy Computers at $249.95. Advanced orders such as mine were discounted to $147, but took over ten months (see accompanying article) to fill, and was prepaid. This is not an inexpensive cartridge. Possibly other products in development will force some competition in this area. Still the new capabilities to me are worth the investment.

Finally the software programs to do the diagnostic, backup, and Mac disk transfer do not make use of the GEM, pull down menus, or the mouse. The menus with numbered entries are much more cumbersome then a GEM based program. Keeping track of the options you've selected is not easy.

Despite these problems the cartridge works well. Until now my major problem in using Mac emulation had been disk compatibility. Once the cartridge is connected, you merely run the program DMMXFER.PRG. A menu with sub-menus allows you to pick 400K MFS or 800K HFS Mac disks, source or destination drives, (if the source or destination is a file instead of a disk), and the type of transfer--Magic/Spectre to Mac or the reverse. The disks I have made on various drives have been readable by Macintosh drives and I have had no problem reading Mac disks onto my format. These Magic/Spectre format disks were then used with my Spectre 128 cartridge. Both application and System/Finder software seem to run perfectly after transfer on my Spectre system. Magic Sac owners should remember that Magic HFS format can only be used if the Hard Disk 20 HFS patch is loaded during the boot process. Still all emulator owners should be able to transfer 400K MFS format. It seemed to make no difference which drive I used, except for 800K HFS disks which, of course, require a double-sided drive. Also the cartridge works just as well with one drive as it does with two.

Here are some sample times (in minutes ', and seconds ") for transfer (reading and writing):

From->To	400K MFS	800K HFS
Magic->Mac	3'14"	6'15"
Mac->Magic	3'19"	6'25"

Backups

The use of the cartridge for backup is a little more involved. The cartridge is connected just as with Magic/Mac transfers and you begin by running DMFMBKUP. This program is complete with a set of backup-control directives that allow you to select varying levels of "analysis" for each track of the disk. These backup controls, and the other backup parameters, are again selected from numbered

menus. The default with no parameters specified is enough "analysis" to backup most protected disks. Times, using the default parameters, to backup a single-sided disk varied from 3 minutes and 20 seconds up to 5 minutes 30 seconds. I can only assume the different copy protection techniques were responsible for longer copying times.

The backup "control files" for different copying modes are read off the disk. Users can add their own backup directives to the end of the file with an editor; instructions are provided on how to do this. Custom directives allow a copy to be made faster by specifying in depth "analysis" only for the tracks that might require it. *Dungeon Master*, using a backup control file versus the default level, took only 1 minute 42 seconds.

I have not encountered any disks that could not be backed up with this product. A parameter also exists to allow backup and restoral of disks to and from GEM files. These files will usually require more than 400K of disk space, i.e. a double-sided disk, even though the file was contained on a single-sided disk.

When the deepest level of "analysis" is used, the level that reads "flux transition spacings" on the disk, a single sided backup required 7 minutes and 30 seconds to complete. When the output was directed to a file on my hard disk the output file was over 3.5 megabytes in length! The documentation claims that high density (1.44 meg) disks can also be read and backed up with this method. In fact, the documentation goes further and says in some cases one disk may require up to 9 megabyte of storage in this full flux transition mode! Such massive storage is only required if producing a file from the disk; a normal copy, disk to disk, in this mode simply takes more time, but no extra storage space. Still this amount of precision reading, analyzing, and writing data to disk suggests other uses for this cartridge. Since the disk file documentation also provides the file format for storing information from high density disks, high density archival programs might be possible. In addition, this precise copying also allows you to backup copy protected disks from Amiga, Macintosh, and IBM high density drives. Five and one-quarter inch drives can also be used in the backup process.

Opitions

My cartridge was ordered with no special options. Happy Computers sells options that include a battery backed clock, a switch and port to add 2 more disk drives, and a pass through cartridge port. Until I see an actual cartridge with these options I can't comment on how well they work. I would enjoy the pass through cartridge port myself; unhooking the Discovery cartridge and cables and then putting in the Spectre cartridge is time consuming.

Anyone with information, problems, or questions about the cartridge can write:David Glotfelty, 3 Steinwehr Ave.,Gettysburg, PA 17325; or leave a message on the WAACE ARMUDIC board for me. For now, I have to recommend anyone needing Mac disk capability to take a serious look at this product. With its disk backup capabilities this cartridge seems to be on the cutting edge of ST hardware additions.

Note: See the author's accompanying article **UnHappy Situation,** *detailing some other problems.*

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UnHappy Situation

The Long, Dusty Road to a Flawed Product

Reviewed by David Glotfelty

Don't Watch the Mail Box

In writing a review of Happy Computer's new Discovery cartridge I found myself very pleased with the product but very displeased with the company's delays in delivery and attitudes. Because I think their product is a good one, with valid and legal uses, I wholeheartedly recommend it if it can purchased in stock from a dealer. If you choose to order a Discovery cartridge, or especially any 'new' (read 'vapor') product from Happy Computers, Inc. you should be advised about their track record in delivery of advanced orders. First their words, straight from the Discovery cartridge disk documentation:

"FIRST DELIVERY OF ADVANCE ORDERS, WHAT TOOK SO LONG?"

"We regret that it took much longer than originally expected to begin shipping the first DISCOVERY CARTRIDGE units. In our original literature we said "WE CANNOT PROMISE ANY SPECIFIC DELIVERY SCHEDULE FOR ADVANCE ORDERS" and also "WE WILL WORK TO SHIP YOUR ORDER AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, WITHOUT COMPROMISING THE QUALITY AND FUNCTION".

"This is the commitment we have met".

My copy of the Discovery cartridge was ordered and paid for on December 15, 1987.

My Discovery cartridge arrived by mail on November 9, 1988. Over ten months of waiting and 30 dollars spent on phone calls to check on product status lead me to wonder if the 'generous discount' was worth it. When the product (and a good one it is) finally arrived in November I was stunned that it was real. I had given up hope.

Yet a Dark Cloud

Is it all clear sailing now? No, I am afraid there is another dark side to dealing with Happy Computing--their attitude toward other corporations' products.

Again, I quote verbatim from their disk documentation:

"The most likely candidate for these sockets are MACINTOSH 64K OS ROMS, which would be intended for use with the MAGIC SAC product."

"HAPPY COMPUTERS cannot guarantee the performance of another company's product when used with the DISCOVERY CARTRIDGE. HAPPY COMPUTERS has found that the current version of the software portion of the MAGIC SAC product from DATA PACIFIC will treat a DISCOVERY CARTRIDGE which has a battery backed up clock option and MACINTOSH ROMS, just like the MAGIC SAC's hardware, and allow the MAGIC SAC program to operate, but we cannot guarantee this."

"The user could achieve a superior system by substituting the DISCOVERY CARTRIDGE for the MAGIC SAC hardware cartridge..."

"... We can state that the DISCOVERY CARTRIDGE has not copied any copyrighted portion of the MAGIC SAC product. The primary reason that the MAGIC SAC is able to run MACINTOSH programs is by virtue of the MACINTOSH ROMS. There is no computer program written by DATA PACIFIC inside the MAGIC SAC CARTRIDGE.."

"The DISCOVERY cartridge does not rip off the MAGIC SAC..."

Now when Data Pacific (Magic Sac) or Gadgets by Small (Spectre 128) wants to allow someone else's product to be utilized with their offering they come to an agreement with the vendor to resell his product. Or they direct you to a commercial resaler who is authorized to sell the component you need, e.g. the Epstart printer driver or the copyrighted Apple ROMS you need for the cartridges. Happy Computing however is aware that neither the *Magic Sac* or *Spectre 128* products are sold as software only--in fact several of the software updates to the *Magic Sac* could be made available on GENIE and COMPUSERVE only because the product also required a hardware component. Happy Computers is obviously not reselling the software component for *Magic Sac* under license or agreement, but they know software (developed with months of intense labor by David Small) is available on BBS's.

Honorable Intentions?

So when they offer you instructions and the ability to make the cartridge on their board perform as a *Magic Sac* or a *Spectre 128*, what do you think their intent is? Another quote:

"We are not predicting the future, but it is possible that DATA PACIFIC may attempt to prevent

future versions of their Magic Sac product from operating with a MACINTOSH ROM equipped DISCOVERY CARTRIDGE. This may consist of some hardware lockout which looks for the HART chip, and stops the Magic Sac software from running. The DISCOVERY CARTRIDGE has a feature which hides the HART chip to account for such cases. Our current software release does not utilize this feature.'

This sort of poorly veiled attempt at ripping off the competition's products only leads to good products eventually becoming incompatible with each other in order to protect themselves. It is only reasonable that Gadgets by Small or Data Pacific should try to protect their product from a rip off by Happy Computers. Sadly too, the Discovery cartridge has a legitimate use as a backup and transfer product. Backups don't have to lead to illegal copying, as manufacturers are able to require the user to have the documentation such as in the games *EMPIRE* or *BREACH*. In this form the user must read the manuals for keywords to continue the game.

So despite the ability to sell the product for legitimate purposes, Happy puts out a product which is potentially threatening to other vendors, and the user ends up caught in the middle.

A final quote from the documentation:

"For example, 512K EPROMS could be programmed with the MACINTOSH 64K program in one bank, and some other program in the other bank. Copying MACINTOSH ROMS into EPROMS may be a violation of APPLE's copyright. HAPPY COMPUTERS cannot advise you on the legality of doing this. We are cautioning that it may be illegal."

Let me caution you more directly: copying Apple's ROMS is definitely and completely illegal. At this point, of course for no special reason, Happy Computing's documentation mentions how specific types of EPROMS might be programmed with Apple's copyrighted software and would fit in their cartridge. Gee, why would they do that? Let me caution you again--anything other then original Apple ROMs are illegal.

So there it is, my problems with a company that makes a fantastic product. But here are my suggestions, strongest recommendation, to Happy Computers, Inc. to improve the way it does business and thence its reputation in the Atari community.

1. Remove any and all documentation or suggestion of ways to copy or build someone else's product from your Discovery cartridge package.

2. Send out proper manuals to all users who purchased a cartridge delivered without them.

3. Only offer a product you can deliver, or advise the user up front that a product is being developed with their money and will not be available for a long period of time. Keep a phone line open to allow for those who want a refund.

4. Take a positive attitude towards phone support for your user when he buys an expensive computer product from your company. This is a 'bite the bullet' area that is not cheap, but is a necessity for any responsible corporation, which you should want to become.

These are my practical suggestions for Happy Computers, Inc. to improve the way it does business and its standing in the Atari community.

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Disk Cataloger and Label Printer

A Practical and Low-Cost Label Program

Review by Vernon W. Smith

A PD Favorite

Going up on GENIE in mid-September, a new disk label program by a Syracuse engineer was downloaded by 250 people during the first two days.

The program supports Panasonic and Star NX-10 printers and can be modified for other Epson-style printers by the author for registered owners.

It's a shareware program by Saraware. (See *Current Notes* ST Library #276 Disk Cataloger and Label Printer.) The author, Ed Baumgras, is chief engineer at Pass & Seymour in Syracuse, New York and a member of Atari Computer Enthusiasts of Syracuse.

You can purchase it on disk from *Current Notes* or download it for free. If you want a personally customized upgrade with unlimited capacity, you send $10 with a blank disk to SaraWare, P.O. Box 321, Baldwinsville, NY 13027.

The program does more than print labels. It also provides a catalog of your ST disk library by category, disk number, source, date, and title.

Documentation is included in the program folder.

Habit Forming

As a Beta tester during the development of the Panasonic printer portion, I only fumbled a couple of times at first use. Now that I've cataloged more than a hundred disks, I find the program addictive. A drawer full of disks without every one labeled for reading on the top spine looks incomplete, unfinished somehow to my newly disciplined eye.

When you double-click on the RUNME1ST.PRG file, you get a screen that has 10 choices:

1. Add files
2. Edit files
3. Print by category
4. Print by disk number
5. Print by source
6. Print by date
7. Print by title
8. Print by label
9. Configure printer
0. Pack the data base

If that last one confuses you, as it did me, packing is what you do to delete entries which you have previously marked with a Control-D during the editing function.

Ed has placed several real and some fictitious disks in the sample illustrations catalog which you receive. At least, I had not heard elsewhere of a supposed arcade-type disk named "Find Elvis" by a group called "Memphis Memorys" or a gambling-type disk in the Public Domain named "N.Y. State Lottery."

Limited Capacity?

The idea is that you can see the form of entries the author has in mind, delete them, and make your own entries up to the capacity of the shareware offering. (I am sworn not to reveal the limit of the initial shareware program, but I can tell you it's enough to get you hooked and not enough to complete your library if you're the kind of user who most needs this type of program.)

Once you delete the original items and replace and extend them with your own real entries, you face an Add files screen with black areas showing the length provided for each of the following:

Title
Publisher
Category
Comments
Disk size
Disk number
Documentation
Date purchased or acquired
Source of software

I was a little intimidated by this at first, but soon realized that as I typed from the keyboard, the lines filled in sequence. A Return or an Up or Down Arrow moves the cursor if an area is not completely filled. However, if you type beyond an area, what you are typing goes into the next area and has to be removed with the Backspace. You can't backspace above an area. You have to use the Up Arrow to go back or the Down Arrow to recycle through the lines. Corrections replace what they are typed over.

I set up my first disk this way:

Title: Compute!s ST Artist Bk 1 (24 characters available)
Publisher: Compute! (19 characters)
Category: Clip Art (Nine characters)
Comments: Goes with book (14 characters)
Size: SS (This area had to be explained to me by the author. It allows five characters and he uses it to show not only whether a disk is single-sided or double-sided, but also whether it is 3.5 or 5.2

since he uses both 3–1/2–inch and 5–1/4–inch drives with his ST.)

Disk Number: CA001 (Five characters. The author suggested that letters and numbers are more useful than just numbers.)

Documentation: B (One character is allowed and the author puts Y or N. I use B for Book, D for Disk, and M for Manual or Magazine.)

Date: 01/01/86 (To be honest, I couldn't remember when I bought the book and disk, but you have to have a complete date for each entry in order to print out the labels.)

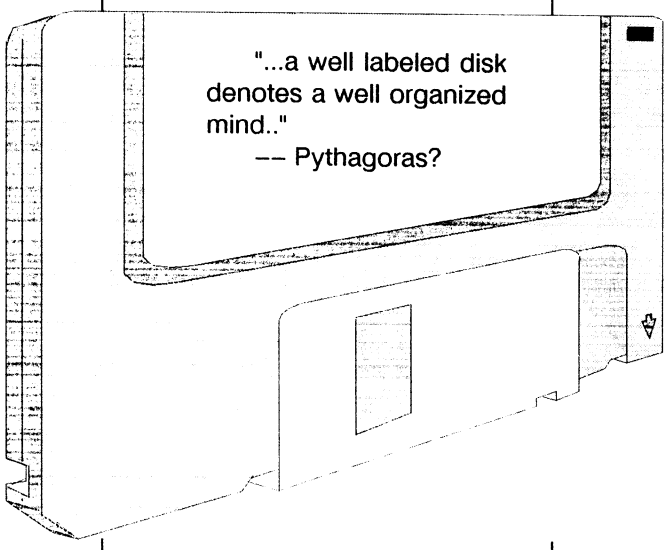
Source: BD (Two characters are allowed and I use BD for B. Dalton Books and other initials for other stores where purchases are made.)

The catalog printouts appear in condensed type with one line for all entries from a specific disk, arranged by the chosen disk sequence. At the end of a page of continuous-feed paper, the perforation is skipped and the page number is printed at the bottom before continuing to the next page. The top of the page shows the time and date of the printing. On the registered version, your name and serial number also appear at the top of each page.

Labels can be printed one at a time by disk number or all entries following a specific date. It is also possible to print out sequential labels in groups of 10, 100, or 1,000 using disk numbers.

The program requires a single quote before and after the ID Number or date to trigger printout and, as mentioned in the documentation, it will bomb back to the desktop if either quote is not entered. It doesn't require rebooting the computer, but it does require reloading the program. Be sure to enter the date *before* the first one you want to print.

Getting the labels to line up for continuous feed in my Panasonic KX-P1092 was very fussy work. As a result, I asked the author to modify my registered version to be one character less wide and one character less deep. The label outline in Pica-size type on the original was a tiny bit larger than the 2–3/4–inch by 2–3/4–inch paper area, which made the appearance less attractive to me. The revision fits the area much better. The Star NX–10 label-fit and continuity- feed, for which the program was first designed, present no problems at all.



I especially like having the title appear on the top spine as well as on the top front side of the disk. I can identify each immediately as I look through the storage drawer without having to pry them apart.

The initial shareware program is designed for 2–3/4–inch by 2–3/4–inch labels, but registered owners receive added label capacity to fit 5–1/4–inch disks and 3–1/2–inch disks in which the label depth is desired to be less than 2–3/4 inches.

The author mentions that good quality, tractor-feed, single-label width, 2–3/4 x 2–3/4 labels to match his program can be purchased in quantities of 2,500 at $12 per 1,000 from "Labels To Go." 1040 Broadway, Westville, NJ 08093. I sent $30 for 2,500 and received them in seven days. There was an additional charge (less than $2) for shipping. In my area, it's impossible to find labels of this size at all and the prices for smaller sizes are several dollars for quantities of 50 or less.

Ed Baumgras created the program with DBMAN, which he calls "the finest, fastest, and most complete database available for the Atari ST Computer."

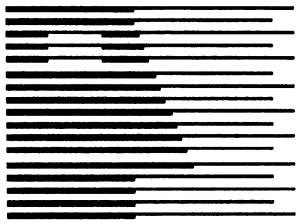
The author is continually upgrading the program.

My major complaint with the present registered owner version is that there is no way of seeing the catalog on the screen except entry by entry. I would like to see a Print to Screen option that would scroll the categories in the same form as they print out.

The real appeal of the program to me is that it is inexpensive, it does a specific job I need to have done to keep better track of my computer disks, and it works the way the on-disk instructions say it will. That's no small accomplishment in these days of commercial programs which arrive at inflated prices with more bugs than Beta versions used to have.

STARTING BLOCK

By Richard A. Gunter



Of Boots and Other Accessories

Two features of the ST system are apt to catch the new user's eye fairly early. They are desk accessories and autorun support. Let's consider desk accessories first. If you're an old (watch that word, fellah!) 8-bit user, they're the more exotic concept.

Desk Accessories. Desk accessories are programs that load at system startup, and remain in memory, ready to run at the click of a mouse. On the desktop, the menu bar at the top of the screen shows an item called "Desk." The associated drop-down menu lists the currently loaded desk accessories. To run one, just click on its title. An accessory may establish a print spooler, allowing you to print a file while doing other things. Another might install a ramdisk, and others might provide calendars, alarm clocks, or other functions. Some of them, such as print spoolers, may set up functions to run automatically; such accessories may not provide a run selection on the menu.

What makes desk accessories exciting is that GEM applications have a similar menu bar with a similar drop-down menu. The menu bar item may be designated as "Desk" or a "Fuji" symbol, usually at the extreme left of the bar. When your GEM application is waiting for you to do something, you can run a desk accessory, then return to the other application.

The ST is not really a multi-tasking machine. That is, it really isn't designed to do more than one thing at a time. Desk accessories permit the ST to do a limited form of multi-tasking.

As Frank Sommers noted in the September issue, tremendous power is waiting to be harnessed by clever designers: desk accessories integrated with applications programs. A few designers are beginning to take advantage of their potential.

Desk accessories must have the file extender ".ACC" or they won't load. In addition, they must be in the root directory of your boot drive (not inside a folder). If you have no hard drive, that would be Drive A. If you have a hard drive, put the desk accessories in Drive C. All desk accessories in that directory will try to load at system boot time. Don't bother with more than six, though; that's the system maximum.

Drawbacks of Desk Accessories. The down side is threefold. First, desk accessories occupy memory. If you're running a heavy-duty memory hog, like any desktop publisher, you may not want them around. Second, some desk accessories and some applications may not get along. I haven't run into any trouble yet, but I don't use many accessories right now. Third, a faulty desk accessory on a hard drive can be a real nuisance to get rid of. You have to be able to get the system up in spite of it, so that you can delete the offending accessory or change the ".ACC" to anything else. (Renaming deactivates it so that it won't load again). Once you've done that, you must reboot to get the offender out of memory. Matter of fact, you must reboot to get any desk accessory out of memory.

The AUTO Folder. AUTORUN.SYS is a file name that most veteran 8-bit users came to know and love (or hate, depending). Same with SpartaDos' ".BAT" files. Those little jewels allowed us to run one or more programs; installing ramdisks and the like--all automatically.

Since the ST is a significantly more powerful machine, we'd expect no less capability, and it's there. The special folder called AUTO, sitting on your boot drive, is the ST's version of AUTORUN.SYS, but it works a bit differently.

Programs in the AUTO folder are automatically run at system startup. All you have to do is create the folder, and copy the programs into it. Almost. There are a few restrictions.

For one thing, only non-GEM programs will run from an AUTO folder. A "nugget," as Frank Sommers calls it, from Ralph Turner's book is that programs in the AUTO folder are run **before** GEM is initialized. Moreover, only programs named with the ".PRG" extension will run from the AUTO folder. How to tell GEM from non-GEM applications? Easiest way is to try running a program from the AUTO folder. If it runs, it isn't GEM.

The second important limitation on the AUTO folder is the order in which the programs are executed. Programs are run in the order that they were added to the folder. Read that last sentence again; I really meant it. The best way to build the AUTO folder, then, is to create the folder, and copy the programs you want to run into it. One at a time, in the order you want them to run. Watch out for copying the whole folder to another

boot disk. Your carefully chosen autorun order could be disturbed.

Giving Your System Inhibitions. Suppose you have a bunch of desk accessories on your boot disk or hard drive, and several programs set up to run automatically from the AUTO folder. But this time, you don't want to load all those accessories, or you want to prevent some of those programs from running. In other words, you want to change the "configuration" of the system for some reason. GDOS is a good example: some applications won't run without it, and some won't run with it. What to do?

Simple. Just rename GDOS.PRG to GDOS.PRX (or any other name, as long as the extension isn't ".PRG"). To do this, click once on the file name or icon (it will turn dark). Move the mouse pointer to the "File" drop-down menu and click on "Show Info." A box will appear, with a cursor on the file name line. Change the file extension, and either click on "OK" or hit the RETURN key. The same technique works for accessories, as well. Renaming the programs won't disturb the order you want the programs to run. A mild hassle, but it works.

SUPERBOOT: Hassle Eliminator. Superboot is a shareware program by Gordon W. Moore that goes a long way toward reducing the hassles involved in using several different combinations of desk accessories and autorun programs.

Essentially, what it does is take care of that tiresome renaming task for you, allowing you to build one boot disk containing everything you need for several different purposes. When you start your system, you can select the exact combination you want for this session, or pick one of several pre-defined configurations that you've set up. For example, I have one configuration defined for word processing, another for desktop publishing, and another with just a ramdisk.

Superboot comes with documentation and a setup program. If you find yourself wanting different system configurations for different purposes, Superboot may be just what you need. It also gives you a way to inhibit a bum disk accessory -- letting you bring up the system so you can delete it. Since the program is shareware, it's available for the cost of a download. If you like it, send the author a check; Superboot is more than worth it, and he is very helpful if you run into problems with the program. Version 4.1 is available on CompuServe and ARMUDIC.

Even though the Superboot documentation is pretty complete and easy to follow, a few people have told me they've had a little trouble getting it set up to run properly. I had a few fits and starts myself.

It helps to set up the AUTO folder first. Create an empty AUTO folder on your boot drive, then copy SUPERBT.PRG into it. Next, copy your autorun programs into the folder. Remember to copy these programs in the exact order you want them to run. Unless you have something very special, SUPERBT.PRG always should run first. Place the desk accessories that you may want to use in the root directory of your boot drive (not in a folder).

Create a folder named SUPERBT inside the AUTO folder. Now run the configuration program SUPER_CS.PRG. This program allows you to specify several options governing what SUPERBT.PRG will do when it runs. The documentation gives a good explanation of each option.

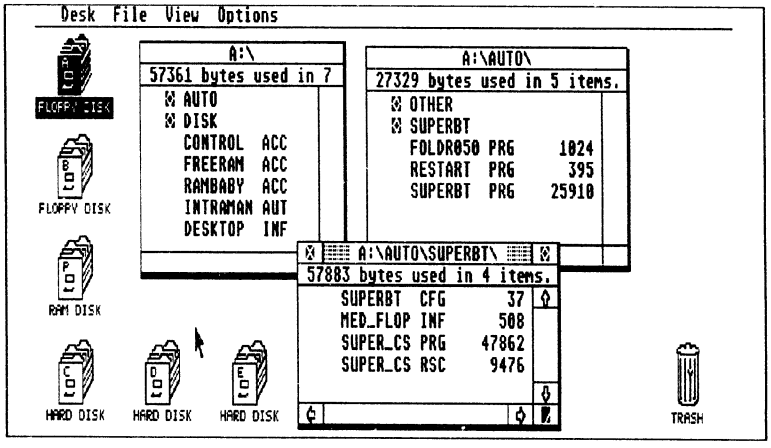
Once you've initialized the AUTO folder and put the desk accessories on the boot disk, SUPERBT.PRG should be able to find everything. (See Figure 2 for a completed AUTO folder and contents). When it runs, Superboot displays a menu from which you can select the accessories and programs you want to use. DON'T forget that SUPERBT.PRG should always be active (selected).

One of the more useful features of this package is that you can define function keys for your most-used combinations of accessories and autoruns, but you may want to play around without function keys till you are comfortable with Superboot.

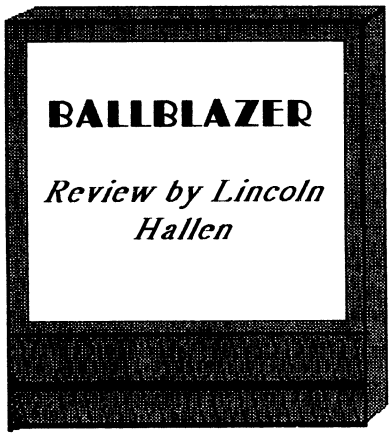
One little snag: if you use Tom Hudson's clever ReSTART program from STart magazine, make sure you disable it before running the Superboot setup program. ReSTART will cause SUPER_CS.PRG to hang up when you're defining function keys.

Don't use this article as a substitute for reading the Superboot documentation; it's only about 13 pages, and is pretty detailed. You may also want to leave the "Other" file selections alone until you have everything else working.

Happy booting!



Completed Superboot Folder Set



"BALLBLAZER: the simplest, fastest, and most competitive sport in the known universe." This is how the game manual starts out. The game was quite simple to use. It is very fast, and it seems to be very competitive played against either the computer or another person.

The closest sport to *BALLBLAZER* known to us feeble earthlings would be playing soccer on a giant field with a suspended ball (Plasmorb) while the players are driving in little vehicles (Rotofoils). By maneuvering your vehicle in front of the ball, you try to make a goal by pressing the joystick button. Only two players are on the field, and there are no goalies. That's it in a nutshell.

Performance. *BALLBLAZER* is a fast moving game with very good graphics. It uses a split screen. The top screen is what the field looks like from your vehicle, and the bottom half of the screen is what your opponent sees. It is easy to tell whether the ball is in front of you or your opponent and aids somewhat when you try to steal or block the ball.

The game has very good music and use of sound. A color monitor or TV is required.

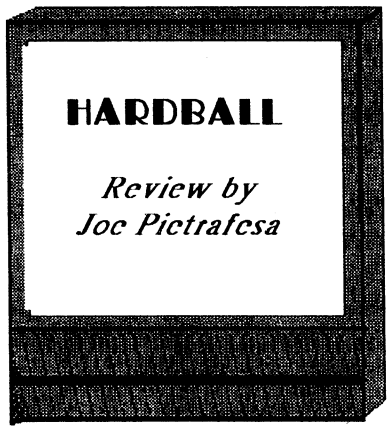
Features. This is a cartridge game for the XE or XL computers. It is a one or two person game which lasts only three minutes. There are nine levels of play, and you are able to increase the game length up to nine minutes. The game ends, however, if one person scores ten consecutive points.

Ease of Use. For an old fogy like myself, the game was easy enough to follow. I still lacked the skill in stealing and keeping the ball away from my opponent and never did figure out how to put myself between the goals and my opponent. The game has been around for years, and there don't seem to be any bugs or pitfalls in the software.

Documentation. The documentation is very good. It is complete and provides full disclosure as well as hints on the play.

Support. Like all Atari products there is a 90-day warranty with the cartridge as well as a phone number to call.

Summary. This fast moving and short game is a handy one to play when you get the urge to sit down for just a few minutes. Future air traffic controllers should have to use this game to sharpen their skills.



Peanuts, popcorn, and Cracker Jacks. The smell of hot dogs in the air. You can almost see yourself sitting in the stands waiting for the first pitch. It's the All-stars against the Champs, and you get to control all the action when you play *HARDBALL*!

HARDBALL is a simulated baseball game that was produced by Accolade, Inc. first on disk, in 1985, and now in cartridge form for the Atari XL/XE computers.

HARDBALL is a unique game. Not only do you manage the team by controlling which players play, but you also control the players' actions such as hitting, pitching and running. As a manager, you decide whether to steal second base or sacrifice bunt. As a player, you decide whether to pitch a curve or a slider. Because of the dual roles you play, your pleasure in playing the game is doubled.

The game begins with a screen in which you decide what type of game you are going to play: playing either against the computer or a friend; playing with a designated hitter or without; and who will bat first.

After the game selection screen, you will see the manager's screen. This is where you will decide which players will have the opportunity to start the game, and which ones get the splinters. Also on this screen, you will see options to exchange player positions, position your infielders and outfielders (either they can play short or deep), and even to intentionally walk a batter. This can all be accomplished by pressing the select key. During the game, you will automatically return to the manager screen if you press select.

Once you've selected the team you want, you are ready to play. The screen now shows a pitcher on the mound facing a mean, hungry batter waiting to clobber the little white ball. The pitcher has four different pitches, which can be any combination of the following: fastball!, fastball, offspeed, changeup, curveball, slider, screwball. The person must choose which pitch he wants to pitch to

the batter. Now the person controlling the batter must decide what he wants to do. He can either swing away, bunt, or steal a base. Both the pitcher and the batter control their actions by having the player move the joystick in the direction in which the correct move is located and then by pressing the fire button.

Now the pitcher must decide where to place the ball: outside, inside, high and tight, or low and outside. He does this also, as before, by pointing the joystick in the direction he wants to go and then by pressing the fire button. Then the pitcher winds up and hurls the ball.

The batter must be ready to hit the ball. He can control where he wants to hit the ball by maneuvering the joystick and pressing the fire button to initially hit the ball.

If contact is made with the ball, the screen will change to a view of the nine fielders. The ones you see depends on the angle in which the ball is hit. The three screens are broken into left or right field lines, or straight up the middle. Now the person controlling the pitcher controls the fielders. The fielder that is blinking is the one the defense controls. He will either catch the ball or stop the grounder (of course. if he misses the ball, it will bounce past him). To throw the ball, press the fire button and aim the joystick to the base you want to throw (e.g., press up, and you will throw to second base). If you master all the moves, you can play a really good game.

I found *HARDBALL* to be an exciting game as I learned. I really like the way you can control the pitcher and the batter. When you bat, you wait for that one pitch, your pitch, so you can send it to the upper deck for a home run. I would also recommend this game for the person who also likes to coach or manage a team.

The screen with the pitcher is excellent, but the ones with the fielders I didn't much care for. They are not as colorful nor as realistic looking as the pitcher's screen.

The count is full, and the bases are loaded. It's time to make it or break it. The pitch is on the way, and only you can complete the fantasy by playing *HARDBALL*!

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ATARI'S SMALL MIRACLES

by Joseph Russek

LOGO

We begin this month's column with an attractive rendering of the Atari logo. From the center out, a large white logo forms followed by the word "Atari" below. The presentation concludes with the form and the lettering backing onto an undulating rainbow.

```
10 REM 128 COLORS ADDED BY DAVID GARDNER
13 DIM X$(40)
400 I=65
1000 GRAPHICS 23:SETCOLOR 4,0,0:SETCOLOR
1,0,14:COLOR 2:SETCOLOR 0,0,0
1044 DATA 49,55,61,76,81,87,93,104,0
1046 DATA 48,56,61,76,80,88,93,105,0
1048 DATA 47,57,61,76,79,89,93,106,0
1050 DATA 46,58,61,76,78,90,93,107,0
1060 DATA 45,50,54,59,67,70,77,82,86,91,93,96,103,108,0
1062 DATA 45,49,55,59,67,70,77,81,87,91,93,96,104,108,0
1064 DATA 45,48,56,59,67,70,77,80,88,91,93,96,104,108,0
1066 DATA 45,48,56,59,67,70,77,80,88,91,93,96,104,108,0
1068 DATA 45,48,56,59,67,70,77,80,88,91,93,96,104,108,0
1070 DATA 45,48,56,59,67,70,77,80,88,91,93,96,103,108,0
1071 DATA 45,59,67,70,77,91,93,107,0
1072 DATA 45,59,67,70,77,91,93,106,0
1073 DATA 45,59,67,70,77,91,93,105,0
1074 DATA 45,59,67,70,77,91,93,104,0
1075 DATA 45,48,56,59,67,70,77,80,88,91,93,96,100,105,0
1076 DATA 45,48,56,59,67,70,77,80,88,91,93,96,101,106,0
1077 DATA 45,48,56,59,67,70,77,80,88,91,93,96,102,107,0
1078 DATA 45,48,56,59,67,70,77,80,88,91,93,96,103,108,0
1079 DATA 45,48,56,59,67,70,77,80,88,91,93,96,104,109,0
1080 DATA 45,48,56,59,67,70,77,80,88,91,93,96,105,109,0
1082 DATA 1,1
1085 I=I+1
1090 READ X:IF X=0 THEN X=112:Y=115:GOTO 1200
1100 READ Y:  IF X=1 AND Y=1 THEN 3000
1115 COLOR 1
1200 PLOT X,I:DRAWTO Y,I
1210 IF X=112 THEN 1230
1220 GOTO 1090
1230 GOTO 1085
3000 REM LOGO
3001 COLOR 2:T=5:B=61:FOR R=80 TO 84
3015 PLOT R,T:DRAWTO R,B:PLOT 160-R,T:DRAWTO
160-R,B:NEXT R
3020 FOR R=86 TO 115:IF R>90 THEN T=28+SQR(626-
(116-R)*(116-R))
3030 B=30+SQR(962-(116-R)*(116-R))
3032 PLOT R,T:DRAWTO R,B:PLOT 160-R,T:DRAWTO
160-R,B:NEXT R
3040 SETCOLOR 0,0,14
3046 POKE 1664,232:POKE 1665,142:POKE 1666,10:POKE
1667,212:POKE 1668,142:POKE 1669,26:POKE 1670,208
3047 POKE 1671,76:POKE 1672,128:POKE 1673,6
3050 PRINT USR(1664)
4000 END
```

MOIRE 2

Tiny circles of all colors radiate from the center of the screen. These form into a large multi-colored circle.

```
5 DIM CPTS(20)
10 GRAPHICS 8: COLOR 1:ROWS=320:COLS=192
40 XCENT=ROWS/2:YCENT=COLS/2
50 REM CIRCLE ROUTINE
60 FLAG=1:YS=0.8
90 FOR A=1 TO 20
100 CPTS(A)=SQR(400-A*A)
110 CPTS(A)=CPTS(A)*YS
120 NEXT A
130 R1=5:R2=200:R3=4:OF=3
135 IF R2>110 THEN R2=110
140 GRAPHICS 56:FLAG1=1:SETCOLOR 2,1,1
170 FOR R=R1 TO R2 STEP R3
180 XCENT=XCENT+FLAG1*OF
190 YCENT=YCENT+FLAG1*OF
200 SC=R/20
210 PLOT XCENT,YCENT+FLAG*R*YS
220 FOR A=1 TO 20
230 X=A*SC:Y=CPTS(A)*SC
250 DRAWTO XCENT+FLAG*X,YCENT+FLAG*Y
260 NEXT A
270 FOR A=20 TO 1 STEP -1
280 X=A*SC:Y=CPTS(A)*SC
290 DRAWTO XCENT+FLAG*X,YCENT-FLAG*Y
300 NEXT A
310 FLAG=0-FLAG
320 IF FLAG<>1 THEN 210
330 FLAG1=0-FLAG1
340 IF FLAG1<>1 THEN 180
350 NEXT R: NEXT E
```

GTIA 10

A vertical line begins forming from each of four corners. Slowly these bead-like lines join. Then a second set of lines appears and so on until the screen is a circular pattern, looking much like a colorful straw basket. After the shape is completed, the screen design begins to move in a spiral. The effect is quite impressive.

```
10 REM GRAPHICS 10 GTIA DEMO
30 GRAPHICS 10
40 REM CHANGE DATA TO CHANGE COLORS
50 FOR CN=0 TO 7:READ CV:POKE 705+CN,CV:NEXT
CN:DATA 6,12,23,42,53,62,73,84
60 C=0:SETCOLOR 4,C,0
70 FOR X=0 TO 39:FOR Y=0 TO 95
90 XW=39-X:YW=95-Y:DIST=INT(SQR(XW*XW+YW*YW))
100 COLOR 1+8*(DIST/8-INT(DIST/8))
110 PLOT X,Y: PLOT 79-X,Y
130 PLOT X,191-Y: PLOT 79-X,191-Y
150 NEXT Y: NEXT X
170 REM ROTATE COLOR REGISTERS
180 CHOLD=PEEK(705)
190 X=705
200 POKE X,PEEK(X+1)
210 X=X+1:IF X<712 THEN 200
220 POKE 712,CHOLD
230 GOTO 180
```


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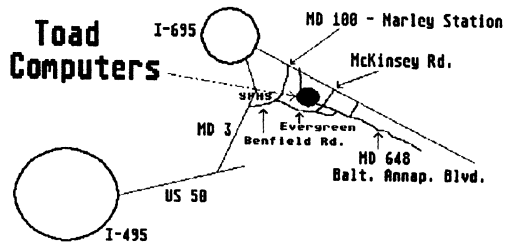

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SONS OF LIBERTY

Bunker Hill, Saratoga, and Monmouth Scenarios

Review by Len Poggiali

Employing their now-classic play system, heretofore used in the creation of Civil War scenarios (e.g., *Gettysburg: The Turning Point*, *Shiloh: Grant's Trial in the West*, etc.), David Landrey and Chick Kroegel have chosen for their fifth Strategic Simulations' war game to focus on the American Revolution. By doing so, the authors have breathed new life into the series, not by further refinements to the game system (as they had done with each successive Civil War entry), but by making dramatic changes in the types and lengths of the scenarios provided.

The move to the Revolutionary War allowed Landrey and Kroegel to increase the number of battles featured (from one to three), while still being able to offer the three levels of play for each (Basic, Intermediate, and Advanced). Part of this was due to the smaller sizes of conflicts (e.g., 6,000 men, both British and American, fought at Bunker Hill; at Shiloh about 100,000 men were engaged). Also, an additional single-sided scenario disk was added along with the standard double-sided game disk.

All of the original features, plus those added in the Shiloh... game (see CN review in July/August issue), have been retained. Menus are employed which help make a relatively complex system quite simple. Whether using a joystick in the Basic mode or the keyboard for the Intermediate and Advanced games, the user should have little or no difficulty moving from command to command and menu to menu. In the Advanced game particularly, players have access to a great deal of relevant information (both tactical and strategic maps of the battlefields; names, types, organizations, and leaders of each friendly unit; numbers of men and their weapons; efficiency, fatigue, and morale ratings; types of terrain; and views of nearby enemy placements; etc.) and control over nearly every aspect of a battle that a real-life commander would be able to manipulate (troop movement and placement, targeting objectives, weapons firing, hand-to-hand combat, reconnoitering, fortifying positions, outflanking one's opponents, etc.). Some of these features are inoperative in the easier modes, so that players can get into the game quickly and add on levels of complexity as they become more familiar with the system.

From the Main Menu, players may determine a number of factors which remain constant throughout the entire game. These include what army one will represent, whether another human or the computer will be the opponent, the game level, the difficulty level, which scenario will be played, and whether one or two drives will be used. Because of the innumerable disk swaps required when employing one drive, using two drives greatly speeds up game play. One should be warned, however, that in both versions I tested, quite often after a game save, the program accessed disk side one from drive two rather than from drive one, which necessitated my temporarily flipping sides on my back-up disk. Because SOL is not copy protected (unlike former series titles), both sides of the game disk can be in each drive.

Lack of copy protection unfortunately comes at a price. In order to access the Main Menu, one must type in the first word from any of over 100 randomly chosen sections from either of the two rule books. This minor annoyance notwithstanding, most users will welcome the opportunity to protect their $39.95 investment.

The three SOL scenarios present excellent studies in contrast. The first--Bunker Hill--is a six-turn game (Shiloh... took fifteen turns) covering six hours on June 17, 1775. As a result, this version can be played in one or two not overly long sittings (Shiloh... took from 10-15 hours to complete). Additionally, the battlefield map and the troops engaged on either side both are quite small, allowing a beginner a much simpler game than any of the Civil War programs.

Although the default setting is for a single player to represent the British side (SSI's defaults sometimes make little sense), the novice user is advised to choose the Colonials for this scenario. If key locations (e.g., Breed's Hill) are properly fortified, and reserves are kept out of action to be used later to plug holes in the defensive lines where needed, then victory is assured.

The British, though greater in number and better trained, nearly lost this battle. Their frontal assaults on the Colonials' works cost them dearly. It likewise is difficult for anyone playing the British in this scenario to avoid these costly bloodbaths.

At seven and nine turns respectively, the Saratoga and Monmouth scenarios are more complex than Bunker Hill, but less so than the Civil War games. The latter is the more dramatic of the two

because there are points in which both sides appear to be on the brink of disaster or heading toward a great victory. Monmouth historically was a stalemate, and it is difficult to make the computer version turn out otherwise.

For the American side, the Saratoga scenario requires a good deal of movement before battle can be engaged. The British player spends most of his time moving and, in addition, readying himself for the American attack. As a result, this scenario does not have the punch of the other two. Nevertheless, each scenario is distinct, and together offer something for every type of war game devotee.

Once again, SSI has brightened up what could have been a tired, old play system. If it turns out--as I suspect it will--that *Sons of Liberty* is SSI's final Atari 8-bit historical war simulation, then SSI's swan song is a classic.

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CHEAT!

"Get more from your games with Cheat!"

Review by Larry Melton

Cheat is a utility that will allow you to play many of your favorite games with unlimited lives. If you're like me, you have some games you enjoy playing, but you never see the advanced screens because you keep getting killed off too soon. Since I have gotten *Cheat,* those higher level screens are now within my reach.

Cheat does not make you invincible. Your player can still get zapped just like always, but now you will always have extra lives to spare. You can take more chances and try different strategies at the high levels without the frustration of repeatedly working your way up through the easy levels. After all, you've practiced enough on the easy levels (that's why they're easy).

Cheat will physically write to your game disk, so Alpha Systems recommends that *Cheat* be used only on backup copies of your games. You should have no problem using *Cheat* on a boot disk, a file, or on a backed-up game cartridge. *Cheat* will work even on copy protected originals, but it will probably void your game's warranty and besides, it's not good practice to tamper with a program when you don't have a backup.

Running *Cheat* is very easy, just boot without BASIC and follow the menus. Cheat gives you an alphabetical list of the game programs you can modify. When you see the title of your game program on the menu, hit the letter next to it and insert your game's disk; then *Cheat* is primed and ready to go. It will scan the entire disk for the routine that keeps track of the number of lives you have left, and when the routine is found, it will rewrite the routine to prevent the lives counter from ticking down. You can also enter a sector number to tell *Cheat* where you want to start the scan, which saves a lot of time if you know that the routine is near the end of the disk.

The operation of the *Cheat* program itself is very similar to a backup utility called *Chipmunk* that was written by Eli Tomlinson (author of *Cheat*) and Mike Palmer, distributed by Microdaft and Alpha Systems. Even though the menu structure for *Cheat* and *Chipmunk* look alike, they are two distinct programs and have nothing else in common.

A list of programs that can be "Cheated" is available from Alpha Systems. There are too many of them to be listed here, but most of them are older games that didn't exactly make it to the top ten. They threw in a few public domain favorites and a smattering of newer games that you still can find in stores, the most recent of which include Boulderdash and Super Boulderdash and Karateka.

The games that I tried *Cheat* on were *Montezuma's Revenge, Pinhead, Jet Boot Jack, Livewire, Roto, Topper, Boulderdash, Up 'n' Down, Mr. Do's Castle,* and *Laser Ants*. It worked great for all of these! There were other games which I have that *Cheat* can work with, but these are the ones that I wanted to try first. I was especially pleased with my modified version of *Montezuma's Revenge* because I can now get deeper into the tomb and try different strategies without fear of losing my last life and starting all over again from the beginning.

There are some who believe that immortality is boring. Perhaps playing a game that has no risk (i.e. no loss of life) will become a meaningless, repetitious exercise. That is true for some games. Everybody has at least one game that they don't play any more because it's too easy. They blast their way to the most difficult level without even working up a sweat, and then it becomes an endurance test. In this case you obviously would not want to use Cheat because it would get boring, but there is another side of the coin.

Suppose that instead of being too easy, you have some games that are too hard for you. No matter how hard or how often you try, you just can't get past the eighth level without losing your last life, so you file it away and never play it. This is the kind of game that *Cheat* was meant for. Now you can practice the eighth level over and over again until you get it right without having to start over from the first level and perhaps losing some lives along the way.

Using *Cheat* on your disks does not mean that your games are permanently altered. An "UnCheat" utility is also provided in case you accidentally Cheat the only copy of your favorite game. I tried "UnCheat" on *Montezuma's Revenge, Roto, Livewire,* and *Pinhead* and found no problems. The "UnCheated" games worked just as if they had never been "Cheated" in the first place.

Cheat works only on game disks that are formatted in single density (128 bytes per sector). It will not work with disks formatted in double density even though no error messages are returned. It will work with enhanced density disks on Atari 1050-compatible

drives, but only if the loss of life routine in your game program is not located above sector 720. (Single density disks go up to sector 720; enhanced density disks go up to sector 1040). *Cheat* worked with DOS 2.0, DOS 2.5, SpartaDos, and Top–Dos, so it will probably work with any dos that uses standard single density sectors.

If you have an Atari 800 or an upgraded 400 (48k required, I believe; the *Cheat* manual doesn't specifically say), you need to use the BASIC version found on side two of the *Cheat* disk. I have an 800XL myself, so I couldn't check the performance on a 400/800. The BASIC version on side two will work on XL/XEs exactly like the executable version on side one, but it is SLOW. I mean"start the program and go eat lunch" SLOW (old timers with cassette program recorders understand what I mean by SLOW). Use the executable version on side one if you can.

Before purchasing *Cheat,* get the list from Alpha Systems and judge for yourself if it is worth your money. If you can find about four games that you like to play, then consider getting *Cheat.* You really can get more fun out of your games by reaching higher levels and new challenges.

Cheat doesn't seem to be copy protected since a sector copy backup will work normally. My original copy has a bad sector on it which may be attributed to software rot, not uncommon on generic single density disks, so make a backup copy of *Cheat* as soon as you get it. Okay? Okay!

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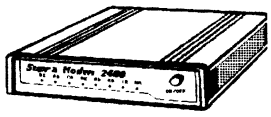

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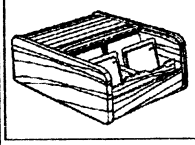

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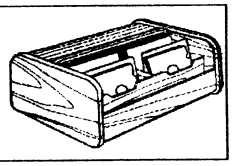

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- Importing Fonts into Publisher ST (Creighton, Oct, pp.65)
- ST Writer Questions & Answers (Noonan, Apr, pp.24)
- The "Whiz-ee-Wig" Myth (Wallace, May, pp.12)
- The Desktop Publishing Market: What Are Your Choices (Price, Mar, pp.40)
- The Remarkably Versatile Atari ST (Price, Apr, pp.12)
- Two Useful Tricks with pc-DITTO (Eitelman, Jul, pp.70)
- Using an Upgraded 320XE (Brooks, Apr, pp.38)
- WAACE Hot List Volunteers (Bonham, Apr, pp.74)
- Your 1st Public Domain Disk (Wrotniak, Apr, pp.28)
- dBASIC dBMAN: Let's Build a Mailing List (Waters, Mar, pp.48)

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CLASSIFIED ADS

[Use CN Classified ads to find or sell that special Atari equipment. Cost is $1/every 50 characters or fraction thereof.]

FOR SALE. I have 2 Atari 800 machines to sell. Both have Basic cartridge, power supply, and are in excellent operating condition, $60 each plus $4 shipping. 1040ST software: Paintworks, $15, Printmaster Art Gallery II, $12, software add $2 for postage. Karl Baker, P.O. Box 7, Center Point, IN 47840.

Would you like to see a sample of **your personal art** or clip art scanned and printed on a laser printer? Send it to Pine Knoll, PO Box 6, Keedysville, MD 21756. Enclose a self-addressed envelope (with adequate postage) and specifics about your computer set-up.

800XL System for Sale - includes computer, disk drive, happy enhancement, printer interface, RS-232 interface, books, and lots of software. $300. Call Jim (301) 776-2930 after 6PM.

Atari Mega ST2 with Supra internal 30 Mb hard disk. Color and mono monitors, SG-10 printer. Many application, education, and game programs included. Complete system $1,900 (OBO), without printer $1,750. Call Ray (301) 775-5076.

FOR SALE: Atari SH204 20 Mb Hard Disk, dust cover, like new, $425. Call Barry at (707) 257-2326 (Napa, CA).

FOR SALE: MAGIC SAC PLUS 2/clock. ROMS (paid Apple dealer $160), software, and packaging. $95. Sam Wang, (803) 654-5456, 108 Poole Lane, Clemson, SC 29631.

MARS 312 / 530-0988

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Aldus Pagemaker Mac	~~$695~~	$299
Harrier Strike ST	~~$49~~	$24
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Powerpoint Mac	~~$249~~	$89
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To ORDER:Send check or money order to COMPUTER SUCCESS,PO Box 5575, Burlington, VT 05402. For this sale only, no phone orders, no credit cards. All sales are final. Closeout items all have full factory warranty and are either new closeouts or store demos.Shipping and handling charges are $4 software,any quantity;$6 hardware each item.

NOVATARI XL/XE PD LIBRARY

Demo Disks

1: Miscellaneous
2: Movie Maker Clips
3: Heavy Metal Art
4: Miscellaneous
5: Desktop DOS + Demos
6: VizPics
7: Mandelbrot factal graphics
8: Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy
9: Wizard of OZ
10: Adventurers Companion

Educational Programs

1: Mathematics
2: Primary Language
3: Teachers' Toolbox
4: Word Builder 1.0
5: Animated stories
6: Geography
7: Bio+Chem with touch typing
8: Basic Math
9: Higher Math and Language
10: The Cell
11: Spelling Bee
12: Math Game
13: WORD GAMES

Games

1: Text Adventures I
2: Gambling
3: Simulations
4: Mazes
5: Parlour Games
6: Graphics
7: Action! Games
8: Arcade Look-A-Likes
9: Text Adventures II
10: Text Adventures III
11: Surf's Up
12: Ski King
13: 20 BASIC Games
14: Super Quiz A & B
15: Two Graphic Adventure Games
16: Space Lords
17: Pinball Games
18: Machine Language Games
19: Dandy Dungeon
20: Holdem Poker
21: Americas Cup
22: Boulder Dash Const. Set
23: Wheel of Fortune & Backgammon

Language Disks

1: Fig-Forth
2: ACTION! source codes (cf. GAMES 7)
3: ACTION! Graphic Demos
4: ACTION! Utility Programs
5: ACTION! Modules #1
6: ACTION! Modules #2
7: BASIC XL-REF Base
8: ACTION! Modules #3
9: Kermit telecom
10: Turbo Basic
11: Pascal Sampler
12: Searcher XL Turbo
13: Turbo Basic for 400/800
14: C Language
15: Turbo Basic Documentation

Music

1: TV/MOVIE Themes
2: ROCK Songs
3: JAZZ Songs
4: BASIC music w/animation
5: Ams Player:12 Rock Songs
6: Ams Player:14 Movie/Video
7: Ams Player:16 Oldies
8: Ams Player:18 Classics
9: Ram130 AMS Beetles' Songs
10: Music Composer Songs
11: Pokey Player
12: Music Major

Utilities

1: MISC introduction
2: Printers
3: DOS 2.5
4: Directory & Label Printer
5: Graphics Trilogy
6: Copymate XE
7: SCOPY sector copier
8: Translator Disk
9: 256K Upgrade
10: Daisy-Dot NLQ
11: Dos 2.6
12: Machdos 2.1
13: Print Shop Editor
14: Easy Find
15: Print Shop Icons
16: Textpro 1.1
17: Print Shop Icons
18: Touch Edit
19: DOS 4.0
20: Graphics
21: 130XE upgrades + Utilities
22: HI-RES 130 (graphics)
23: Rainbow DOS
24: Font Master
25: 3-D CAD
26: Adelaide Symbolic Dis-assembler
27: DB's & Spreadsheet
28: Graphic Utilities & Pics
29: String Magic
30: Print Shop Icons
31: Hacker's Toolkit
32: Weekly Scheduler
33: Textpro 2.5r (telecom)
34: Print Shop Utility
35: Monitor/Debugger
36: Diet & Nutrition
37: General Ledger
38: Super Copiers
39: AtariWriter Printer Drivers
40: Signmaker
41: Billboard Maker
42: Daisy Dot II
43: Graphics Art Department

Telecommunications

1: 850 Interface
2: 835/1030 Modem
3: MPP Modem
4: Amodem 7.2
*5: Chameleon Terminal Emulator *Note: this is a two disk set. Order 5A and 5B.
6: 1030&850 Express (3.0 & 2.1)
7: Data Comm
8: AMIS XM10 BBS program
9: Amodem 7.4 + Rverter
10: FOREM XE BBS

The price for mail orders is $3 per disk plus $1 for postage and handling for every 3 disks. Send checks, payable to NOVATARI, to Jeff King, 10033 Clearfield Ave, Vienna, VA 22180.

Any user group librarians who are willing to trade library disks write or call Roy Brooks, 4020 Travis Parkway, Annadale, VA. 22003, phone (703) 750-0146. We trade with groups all over the world.

WAACE CLUB CORNER

This space is made available to WAACE member clubs for their use in publicizing activities. Material for this column must be in the hands of the Clubs Editor by the 10th of each month. Send copy to John Barnes, 7710 Chatham Rd, Chevy Chase, MD 20815. Material can also be uploaded to the ARMUDIC BBS.

NOVATARI

Northern Virginia Atari Users' Group

President	G.Weatherhead	703-938-4829
VP-ST	Ian Charters	703-845-7578
VP-8BIT	Alan Friedman	703-425-0575
Membership	Earl Lilley	703-281-9017

New Members: Dues are $20/year/family which includes a subscription to *Current Notes* and access to more activities. Join at the main meeting or at a chapter meeting or by sending $20, payable to NOVATARI, to Earl Lilley, 821 Ninovan Rd.SE, Vienna, VA 22180.

Novatari Main meeting: second Sunday of the month at the Washington Gas Light Building, 6801 Industrial RD, Springfield, VA. Take 495 to east on Braddock Rd. (620) to south on Backlick Rd.(617). Left on Industrial Rd. Washington Gas Light is the second building on the right. 5:30 Telecom SIG; 6:15 announcements, open forum, door prizes; 6:45 VAST and 8BIT SIG meetings.

Chapter Meetings: Mt. Vernon/Hybla Valley, 1st Thursday, 7:30 Contact Ron Peters at 780-0963. Sterling, Sterling Library, 7:30-9:30, Dec 9, for 1989--Wed. following Main Meeting. Contact Milo Flagel at 471-5273.

A.U.R.A.

Atari Users Regional Association

President	Steven Rudolph	301-464-0835
8-bit VP	Bob Langsdale	301-390-6554
16-bit VP	James Bonbright,Jr	301-933-4891
Membership	Dave van Allen	301-593-4654

Meetings - Third Thursday of each month in the Multipurpose Room at GRACE EPISCOPAL SCHOOL. The school is on the east side of Conecticut Avenue, 1/4 mi. north of the Connecticut Avenue (North) Exit from I-495. Library sales begin at 7:00, the meeting begins at 7:30.

Correspondence. All correspondence, including membership renewals, changes of address, etc. should be sent to: AURA, P. O. Box 7761, Silver Spring, MD 20910. AURA cannot guarantee *Current Notes* subscription fulfillment unless the member provides written confirmation of address changes, renewals, etc. to the address given above.

New Members. Dues are $25/year and include subscription to Current Notes. Send name, address, phone number, and check to above address.

W.A.C.U.G.

Woodbridge Atari Computer Users' Group

President	Lou Praino	703-221-8193
First VP	Arnie Turk	703-670-2547
8Bit VP	Darrell Stiles	703-494-9819
ST VP	Bill Parker	703-680-3941
Secretary	Frank Bassett	703-670-8780

MEETINGS: 7-9PM, Community Room, Potomac Branch, Prince William County Library, Opitz Blvd., Woodbridge, VA. Entering Woodbridge from either North or South on Route 1, proceed to the intersection of Route 1 and Opitz Blvd. (opposite Woodbridge Lincoln-Mercury). Turn West on Opitz and take first left turn into the library's parking lot. The Community Room is located to your left immediately upon entering the main building. Meeting Dates: Nov 22, Dec 20.

NEW MEMBERS: Initial membership fee is $10/yr plus $1 monthly dues. Membership includes a subscription to *Current Notes*. Join at meeting or send check, payable to WACUG, to Frank W. Bassett, 15313 Blacksmith Terr, Woodbridge, VA 22191.

ARMUDIC BBS

703-573-9207

300/1200/2400 Baud, 8 and 16 bit

Access to the BBS requires a fee in addition to the dues. This fee is $5/year for NOVATARI members and $7.50 for members of other user groups. BBS access fees are to be made payable to "NOVATARI" and sent to: Ed Seward, PO Box 2699, Merrifield, VA 22116.

S.M.A.U.G.

So. Maryland Atari Users' Group

President	Herb Scott	
Secretary	Fred Brown	301-645-4009
Treasurer	Samuel Schrinar	301-843-7916

MEETINGS: 2nd Thursday, 7:30 pm, John Hanson Middle School in Waldorf, MD. Traveling thru Waldorf either east or west on Rt 5, exit on Vivian Adams located 200 ft west of Waldorf Carpets & Draperies and directly across from the Village Square sign.

NEW MEMBERS: Membership dues are $20 and include a subscription to *Current Notes*. Join at the meeting or send check, payable to SMAUG, to Sam Schrinar, 2032 Alehouse Court, Waldorf, MD 20601.

F.A.C.E.

Frederick Atari Computer Enthusiasts

President	Chris Rietman	301-791-9170
Vice President	Mike Kerwin	301-845-4477
Treasurer	Buddy Smallwood	717-485-4714

MEETINGS: 4th Tuesday, 7 - 9:30 pm, Walkersville HS, MD Route 194, 1 mile north of MD Route 26 (Liberty Road). July and August meetings will be held at St Paul's Lutheran Church, 14 W. Pennsylvania Ave, Walkersville, MD.

NEW MEMBERS: Dues are $25/year/family and include a subscription to *Current Notes*. Join at meeting or send check, payable to FACE, to Buddy Smallwood, PO Box 2026, Frederick, MD 21701.

MACC

Maryland Atari Computer Club

President	Jim Hill	301-461-7556
Vice President	Dan Honick	301-356-6453

MEETINGS: last Tuesday, 6:30 pm, Pikesville Library, 1 mi. east on Reisterstown Rd from Exit 20 off the Baltimore Beltway.

NEW MEMBERS: Club Dues are $24/year and include a subscription to *Current Notes*. Join at meeting or send check, payable to MACC, to James Hill, 8591 Wheatfield Way, Ellicott City, MD, 21043.

The new look for the Club Corner allows more flexibility in the way the WAACE confederated clubs use the space provided by *Current Notes*. Club listings have been shortened to allow space for more feature articles and notices, and meeting announcements, etc have been separated from the club information listings to make it easier to use fresh material each month.

G.R.A.S.P.

Greater Richmond Atari Support Program

Mickey Angell.....President.....804–744–3307
Terry Barker.....V.P.....804–379–8175
Tom Marvin .....Secy 804–233–6155

Meetings: 2nd and 4th Thursday at La Prade Library, 2730 Hicks Rd.

Dues: $20 per year (no Current Notes).

WAACE GOINGS ON NOVATARI NOTES

Georgia Weatherhead

A Day At The Races – Now that Virginia has okayed racing, Novatari will be right in there at the December meeting with horse racing. This is a good idea for a party using your ST. At the December meeting only you may buy this new disk for $30. Any other time it will be $40. It was written by Marshall Lake in Falls Church.

The December meeting will also be your last opportunity to get a form allowing you to purchase WordPerfect for $155.

The contest for the best program to select door prizes ends in December. The winner gets a gift certificate. The door prize selector should entertainingly select the winning number from the number of attendees. It may be written for ST or XE/XL. It must truly be random. It must be for at least 500 attendees. Entertaining is the key word. All entrees win something. Turn your entry into either the ST PD librarian or the 8 bit PD librarian in exchange for the disk of your choice.

Elections for 1989 will be held. The following slate of elective officers was announced at the November meeting.

President.....Bonnie Little
XE/XL Vice President.....Nina Kraucunas
ST Vice President.....Ed Seward
Secretary.....Edmund Bedsworth
Treasurer.....Gary Purinton

None of us is as smart as all of us. Volunteers have already taken on the jobs of PD librarians and program chairs and neighborhood SIGs. It is the high interest level and enthusiastic help that makes Novatari outstanding as a user group. The kind of talent needed calls not only for computer programming and technical expertise, but for management, clerical, business, writing, organizing, and phoning skills. Offer your help to our leaders.

I thank you for your support these past two years. It has been a real power trip to be president of Novatari. I joined to learn about my 400 Atari and have graduated to a 512ST, learning far more than I had intended. I shall keep on being a member because there is so much still to be learned from a great group of people, the Novatari members.

AURA

Steven Rudolph

The meeting topic for December will be ***GAMES***. Bring your favorites and share them with the rest of us. There is still plenty of time for holiday shopping after the meeting on the 15th. Don't forget our fabulous door prizes and the used equipment and software table. Don't overlook library disks as stocking stuffers. The ST library is now essentially up to date. Disks can be ordered in advance from Jim Bonbright or they can be picked up at the meetings. There is somethingthere for everyone.

We will also discuss meeting themes for 1989. AURA dues have been increased to $25 to reflect the new Current Notes subscription rates.

The October theme was database programs, applications, and techniques. Linc Hallen gave the 8–bit demonstration, describing three programs and some of his real–life applications. John Barnes brought his hard disk to aid in his demonstration of some of the more sophisticated features of the more popular ST database programs.

WAACE Executive Board

Gary Purinton

Now that Atarifest '88 is all wrapped up, the WAACE Board will be reorganizing for 1989. All clubs who desire to maintain their affiliation with the Washington Area Atari Enthusiasts Confederation are hereby asked to submit a list of their membership and the names of their directors to Gary Purinton. The membership lists are used to validate the number of directors that each member Club is allowed to appoint according to the WAACE constitution.

The organizational meeting of the WAACE Board for 1989 will be held at the Tysons Pimmit Regional Library on Leesburg Pike just inside the Beltway near Tyson's Corner. The meeting will take place on 26 January from 7:30 to 9:00 pm.

Atari User Groups that are not now WAACE members may join by fulfilling the requirements given in the first paragraph above. We expect that participating clubs will contribute toward the effort involved in setting up the annual Atarifests. These "people's" shows are among the best in the Atari world. They are greatly enriched by the participation of all of the area user groups.

WAACE is always looking for new approaches and new ideas. Contribute yours while you still remember what you would like to see improved in the 1989 Atarifest.

If you think your group's name should be listed as a WAACE member Club get after your group to make its contribution.

WANTED: NEW PUBLIC DOMAIN SOFTWARE

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Current Notes' Registered Atari Clubs

Members of registered clubs may subscribe to Current Notes at a discount rate ($20/yr or $38/2 yrs). To add your club to the list, send an initial subscription list of 10% of the members or 6 members whichever is less, to CN Registered Clubs, 122 N. Johnson Rd., Sterling, VA 22170.

ALABAMA

Huntsville AUG, 3911 W. Crestview, Huntsville 35816 205–534–1815.

ARKANSAS

Little Rock Atari Addicts, 28 John Hancock Cir, Jacksonville 72076 501–985–2131.

CALIFORNIA

Atari Bay Area Computer Users Society, PO Box 22212, San Francisco 94122 415–753–8483.

Long Beach ACE, PO Box 92812, Long Beach 90809–2812 213–423–2758.

San Diego ACE, PO Box 203076, San Diego 92120 619–581–2477.

Santa Maria/Lompac ACE, 608 N. Pierce, Santa Maria 93454 805–925–9390.

CONNECTICUT

AUG of Greater Hartford, 503–B East Center St, Manchester 06040.

ST Atari RoadRunners, 1160 South Curtis St, Wallingford 06492.

FLORIDA

Atari Boosters League East, P.O. Box 1172, Winter Park 32790.

ILLINOIS

Central Illinois Atari Users Group, 1920 East Croxton Ave, Bloomington 61701–5702 309–828–4661.

Lake County ACE, PO Box 8788, Waukegan 60079 312–623–9567.

ST Information Group, P.O. Box 1242, Peoria, 61654.

INDIANA

Atari Lovers of Illiana Equaled by None, 706 Center St., Crown Point, 46307 219–663–5117.

LCC/ST, Karl Werner, Eli Lilly Corp Cntr, Indianapolis 46285 317–276–3020.

IOWA

Midwest Atari Group–Iowa Chapter, PO Box 1982, Ames IA 50010 515–232–1252.

KANSAS

Ft. Leavenworth Atari Group, PO Box 3233, Ft Leavenworth 66027 913–651–5631.

Wichita ACE, 1722 N. Murray, Wichita 67212 316–722–1078.

KENTUCKY

Atari Exchange of Louisville, PO Box 34183, Louisville 40232.

MARYLAND

Meade Atari ST, 604 Milldam Ct #42, Millersville 21108 301–987–4266

Nameless AUG, 3475 Manassas Ct, Davidsonville 21035 301–798–0566.

MASSACHUSETTS

Acton–Boxborough Atari Computer Users Society, PO Box 1523, Westford 01886 617–937–8046.

MICHIGAN

Michigan Atari General Information Conference, 28111 Imperial Dr, Box M, Warren 48093–4281 313–978–8432.

MINNESOTA

SPACE/MAST, 3264 Welcome Ave., N., Crystal. 537–5442.

MISSOURI

ACE St Louis, PO Box 6783, St. Louis, MO 63144.

Warrensburg/Whiteman Atari Computer Owners, PO Box 199, Warrensburg 64093 816–747–2543.

NEW JERSEY

Jersey Atari Computer Group, 8 Crescent Rd, Pine Brook 07058.

NEW YORK

Atari Computer Owners of Rochester NY, PO Box 23676, Rochester 14692 716–354–5513.

Rockland Atari Computer Users Group, 29 Riverglen Dr., Thiells, NY 10984 914–429–5283.

NORTH. CAROLINA

Blue Ridge Atari Computer Enthusiasts , Bill Traughber, 106 Alpine Way, Asheville, NC 28805.

Charlotte AUG, PO Box 240313, Charlotte 28224 704–366–4320.

Peidmont Triad AUG, Rt. 9, Box 274C, Reidsville 27320.

Triangle Computer Club, Rt. 3, Box 760, Hillsborough 27278 919–942–2764.

OHIO

Cleveland ACE, 2769 Derbyshire Rd., Cleveland Heights, 44106.

Miami Valley ACE, 1118 Demphle Ave, Dayton, OH 45410 254–7259.

PENNSYLVANIA

Allentown Bethlehem Easton's ACE, PO Box 2830, Lehigh Valley 18001 BBS 215–759–2683.

Spectrum Atari Group of Erie, PO Box 10562, Erie 16514 814–833–4073.

Southcentral PA ACE, PO Box 11446, Harrisburg 17108–1446 717–761–3755.

SOUTH DAKOTA

Rushmore ACE, Gregg Anderson, 3512 Lawrence Dr., Rapid City, SD 57701 605–348–6331.

TENNESSEE

Knoxville AUG, 953 Roderick Rd, Knoxville 37923 615–693–4542.

TEXAS

DAL–ACE, P.O. Box 851872, Richardson, Texas 75085–1872.

ST Atari League of San Antonio, 3203 Coral Grove Dr, San Antonio 78247 512–496–5635.

VIRGINIA

Greater Richmond Atari Support Program, 1420 Yale Ave, Richmond 23224 804–233–6155.

Southside Tidewater Atari Tech Users Society, 5245 Shenstone Circle, VA Beach 23455 804–464–2100.

WASHINGTON

Seattle Puget Sound ACE, PO Box 110576, Tacoma 98411–0576.

WISCONSIN

Packerland Atari Computer Users Society, 339 S. Maple St, Kimberly 54136 414–788–1058.

FAREWELL, WASHINGTON

When I started working in this business, fresh out of college in May of 1982, Atari was a strong and exciting company. Our competitors at the time were retailers such as Computer Age, The Math Box (now MBI Business Centers), Sears and several "discount" stores such as Circuit City, Toys-R-Us and Reliable Home Appliances.

What I saw at that time is many of these retailers selling the "boxes", but few of them providing any support or after-market products (ie. software, books, modems, etc.). That niche is what Applied Computer Associates filled.

Anyone familiar with the history of Atari, knows what the crash of the video game and home computer worlds did to the market's view of Atari. In those years, most people figured Atari was out of, or was going out of business. Most people, except for the Atari computer owners.

The Atari Computer owner is a rare breed. Most of them bought an Atari because they saw that the quality and performance of the computer, over that of the Commodore Vic & 64, was worth paying for. They saw the support that was available in the form of user groups, magazines, software, and stores like Applied Computers. They also saw that other Atari Computer buyers were not a bunch of hackers and teenagers, but professionals looking for solutions to their business and personal computing needs. The Atari owner continued to have faith in their computer, and that faith was rewarded when Jack Tramiel took over Atari in July 1984.

I was in Las Vegas in January of 1985, when Jack Tramiel un-veiled the 520 ST. I marveled, as did the rest of the industry, that a man could take a company, clearly in dire financial straights, and in only 6 months, release a computer that "knocked the socks off" everything else in the industry.

1986 was an tremendous year for Atari, and for Applied Computers. The new ST computers were the talk of the industry and the pride of every Atari owner. Sales of the ST were strong, Atari was advertising, product was available, and once again Atari was an exciting computer company.

They say all good things must come to an end, and in 1987 that's exactly what happened to Atari's honeymoon with the U.S. computer market. 1987 was a disastrous year for Applied Computers and the U.S. Atari community. Price increases in late 1986 took full force in early '87, Atari released no new products, did no advertising, got no public relations. At the same time the prices on IBM clones were falling like lead bricks and new graphic standards rivaled those of the ST. Atari made no efforts to support the U.S. market or its dealers, citing a shortage of product because of strong European sales.

During this time, our competitors changed. No longer were we competing with any of the previously mentioned stores, but instead with a new generation of competitors. Black Patch Computers, with their double-page ads, drastically affected what the Atari consumer was willing to pay for product. Merchandise that had been fairly priced by the local stores, was now being "given away" by Black Patch. Applied Computers stood up to them and challenged their pricing and services, and eventually Black Patch faded away. My fondest hope was that the local market would learn its lesson. No one can survive on 5-10% margins; you must make fair profits in order to survive.

Alas, the market didn't learn a thing. L & Y Electronics picked right up where Black Patch left off, trimming margins to the bone, thinking that with lower prices they could increase their volume. What they didn't realize, is that it wasn't higher prices that limited their sales, but rather the market's lack of demand and Atari's non-existent efforts to create that demand, which was causing the slow-down in sales. By mid-87 and into 1988 those buying an Atari computer could be lumped into two categories; those that owned Ataris or had friends that owned Ataris and those businesses whose employees owned Ataris and had been convinced to purchase them instead of PCs for the employee. Basically the people buying an Atari were not buying based on price, but rather on recommendation, therefore no price cutting was needed because they would have bought it anyway.

All this brings us the present, December 1988. I have evaluated the Atari marketplace and Atari's recent efforts to improve it, but I see no way to recoup the losses we suffered in 1987, and it is with much regret that we have decided to cease operations on December 31, 1988.

If it seems that I am bitter about the whole thing, I'm not. I worked hard these past 6 years, and my efforts to serve the Atari community have not gone un-rewarded. I received fair compensation for my work, and I am proud that our customers were all treated fairly and honestly. My greatest rewards have been in dealing with a group of dedicated and professional people, the employees and vendors I have worked with, and most of all the Atari Computer owner.

I hope the closing of Applied Computers will send a message out to the Atari community and to Atari itself, that the U.S. market is in real trouble. In order to survive we must all work together. Dealers should provide fair prices and service to their customers. Customers need to support those dealers and recognize that the lowest price only benefits in the short run. Lastly, Atari Corporation must commit to the U.S. marketplace by increasing product availability, increasing brand awareness by advertising both locally and nationally, and by introducing new products that will once again make Atari the vibrant company it should be.

My sincere thanks goes out to all the customers and vendors that have supported us over the years, I hope you will continue to support the Atari community every chance you get, and help bring Atari back to the forefront of the industry. With these thoughts and my best wishes, I bid you:

Farewell Washington,

Chris A. Amori

Vice President

Applied Computer Associates, Inc.

Sale begins December 15th - Everything must go!

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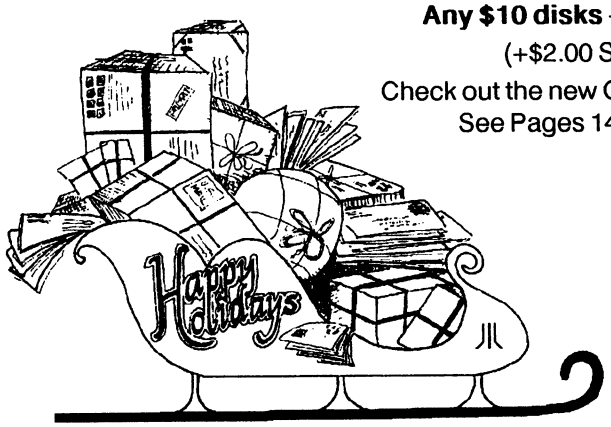

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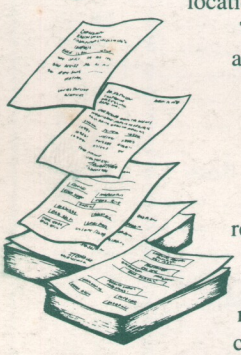

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